# The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal

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September Through December 2025 - Issue 90

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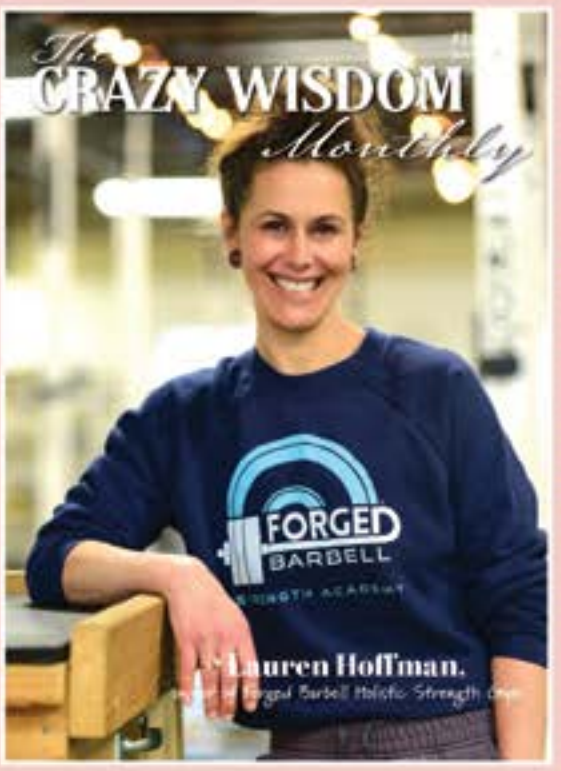


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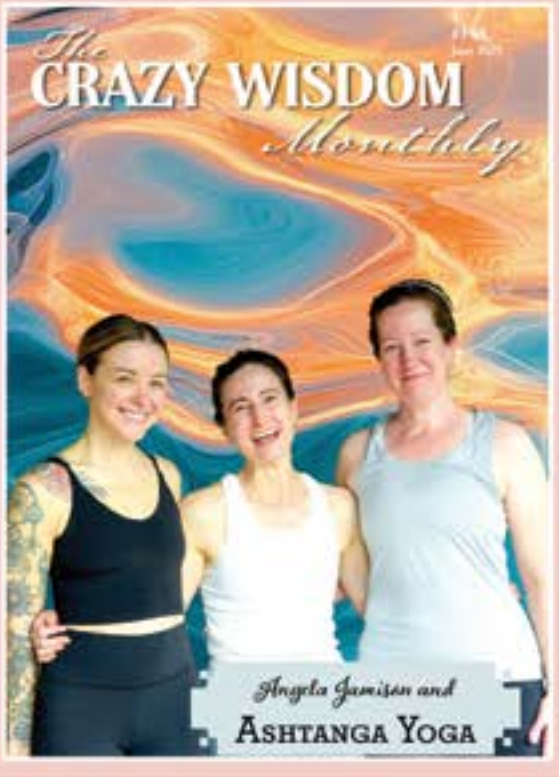


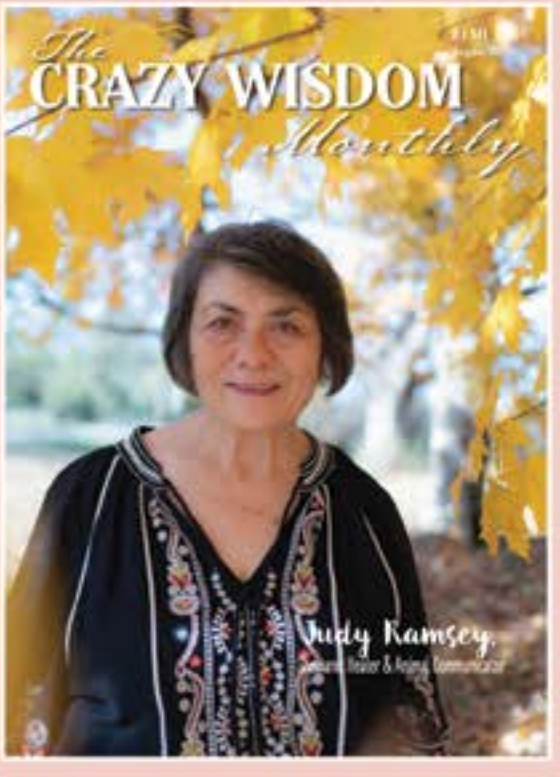

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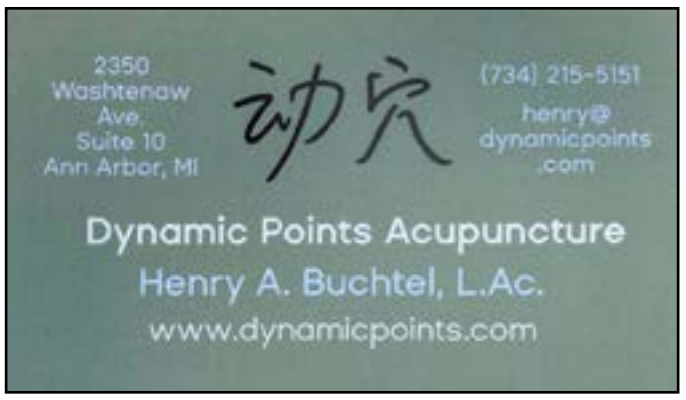


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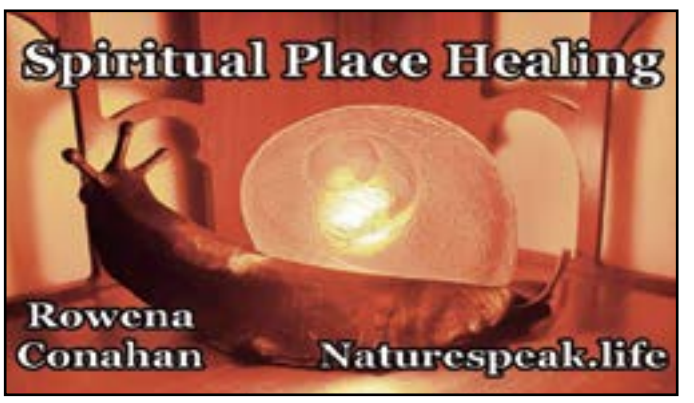


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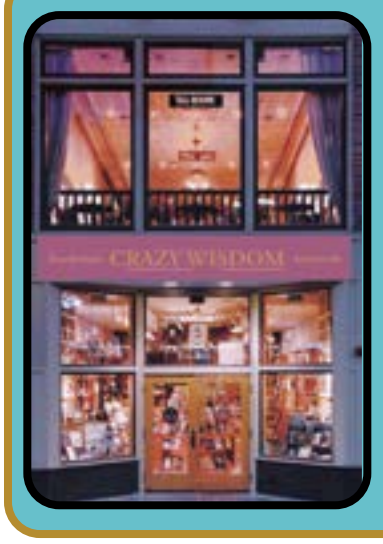


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This issue will be posted on our website as of September 1, 2025

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*—Jess Carmichael, Spirit Post Readings*

Leslie Science & Nature Center is honored to continuing being a part of this critical local publication. Personally, I love reading CWJ, both the digital and print publications. There is something special about the people featured within both journals. ***I feel more connected and appreciative of the individuals and business who care for and celebrate the world around us.*** The consistency of intimate personal stories, alongside deeper philosophical conversations that I really enjoy! Thanks, Crazy Wisdom Journal, for continuing to seek out and feature all of the incredible people making our community special!

*—Susan Westhoff, Executive Director Leslie Science and Nature Center and Ann Arbor Hands on Museum*

Over years and years of devoted service, ***Crazy Wisdom has grown into a magical, influential, and inspiring institution.*** It is one of the things that make Ann Arbor rate as a top place to live, nationwide, and an awesome place to put down roots. Thank you for all your determination and dedication over years and years, to increasing conscious living and quality of life, growing our community, and providing a platform to the highest of standards, for like minded people!

*—Jody Tull, Be in Awe Yoga*

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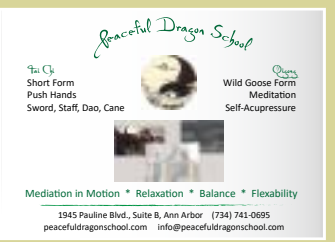
*—Wasentha Young, Peaceful Dragon School*

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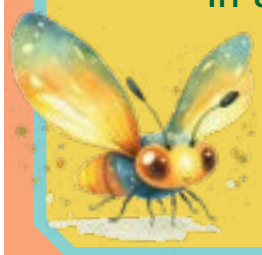


In appreciation of all the talent and hard work that goes into *The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal,* we highlight some of our contributors in every issue.

# Meet Some of Our Creative Team

**Cashmere Morley** is a multidisciplinary designer and storyteller whose work extends to exhibit design, public art, and creative strategy. With a background in journalism and over a decade of design experience, Cashmere leads Pendulee—a design agency focused on helping museums, municipalities, and community organizations make art accessible to all through bold design and storytelling. When not immersed in creative work, she can be found making noise on a guitar or piano, wandering local trails, or dreaming up ideas that sit somewhere between the practical and the poetic.

**Richard Knapp** is recently retired from teaching elementary school music in the Ann Arbor schools. He is a professional singer, mostly opera and musical theater, and he also danced professionally for over 20 years. His wife, Catherine, is a member of the Potters Guild. Knapp and his son, Grayson, worked together to earn their black belts in ninjutsu. He loves to read, ride his bike, walk outdoors and spend time with his two dogs and two cats. Knapp is one of our distribution team members. Say "hi" when you see him delivering the Journal!

**Susan Ayer** worked as editor/publisher of a small monthly newspaper and now focuses on her work as a freelance photographer and wood artist. She loves to travel, explore the world, and experience other cultures. She has been to 68 countries and all 50 states in the US. When not traveling, she spends her time gardening, reading, baking and cooking for her cohousing community, and enjoying her cabin at Friends Lake in Chelsea.

**Catherine Carr** earned her degree in Neuroscience from the University of Michigan in 2011, and she applies a scientific mindset to her investigation of religious and spiritual topics. Recently she published her first book, *Healing Ourselves and the Earth Through Goddess Spirituality*. Carr writes feature articles for The *Crazy Wisdom Community Journal* in the sphere of where spirituality and science meet.

**Carol Karr,** was a senior manager at Crazy Wisdom Bookstore from the time the store was on Fourth Avenue until 2024. She has been the Design and Production Editor of *The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal* for the past fifteen years. She has played a key role in enhancing the look of the publication, and in its overall evolution. Carol is also Crazy Wisdom Journal's webmistress.

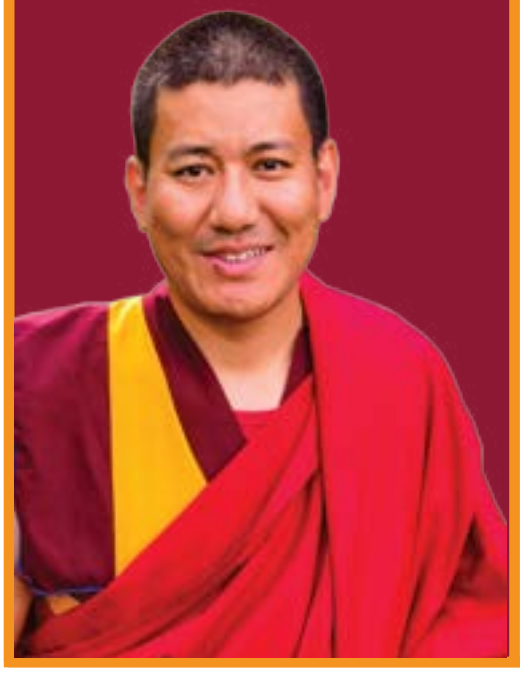
**Karen Quinn- Markwart,** also known as Zephyrine, is an artist, author, storyteller, and spiritual coach. Her passion is to help others understand their natural gifts and talents, lead them toward their inner truth, and assist them in building a connection to the Divine. She spends most days in her little river stone cottage, nestled in a cozy forest edge beside the Rouge River, among her menagerie of animals with her husband and son. Her hobbies include painting, gardening, and napping.

# Demo Rinpoche at the Crazy Wisdom Salon

## Wednesday, October 22nd, 7 p.m.

## at Crazy Wisdom Bookstore in the Upstairs Celestial Lounge

**Demo Rinpoche, Spiritual Director of Jewel Heart Tibetan Buddhist Learning Center, in Conversation with Crazy Wisdom's Bill Zirinsky.**



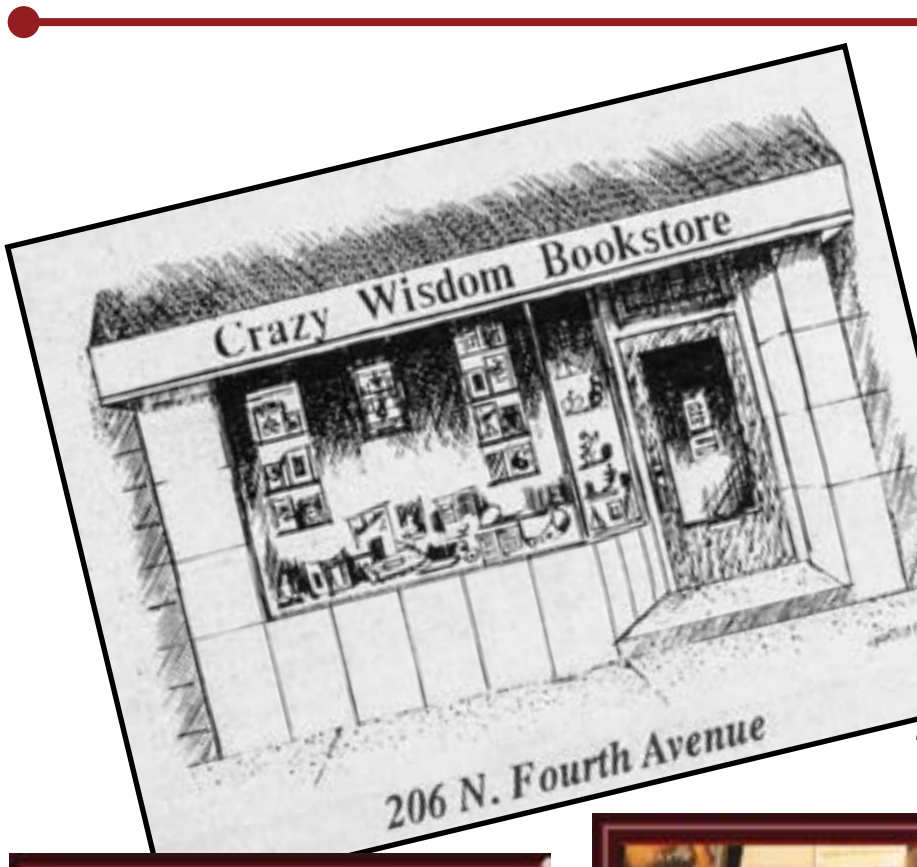
A Public Q+A with the 44 year old Tibetan Buddhist monk and incarnate lama, who leads Jewel Heart, the Ann Arbor-based Tibetan Buddhist Center, recognized nationally and internationally as a center of Buddhist teaching. Demo Rinpoche has spent most of his life studying in monasteries in India with thousands of other monks, and under the Dalai Lama's direct supervision, and he now lives on his own in a simple apartment in Ypsilanti, Michigan. He is the nephew of the late Gelek Rimpoche, founder of Jewel Heart Tibetan Buddhist Learning Center. Since 2018, he has served as Jewel Heart's Resident Spiritual Director.

Rinpoche has an impressive resume of lifelong monastic and religious studies starting at age five, when he entered Drepung Loseling Monastery in Mundgod. He officially joined the monastery in 1987 where he spent nearly thirty years of uninterrupted education in meditation, debate, memorization, philosophy, and composition under the Dalai Lama's direct supervision. After completing his studies at Drepung, Rinpoche received the highest monastic degree of Geshe Lharampa from Gelugpa University in India in 2011. He continued his studies at Gyume Tantric College and was a visiting scholar under the auspices of the Dalai Lama at Sarah College of Higher Tibetan Studies in Dharamsala. At the request of the late Gelek Rimpoche, Demo Rinpoche came to the United States, where he received his master's degree in Inter-Religious Engagement from Union Theological Seminary in New York City in 2018.

Bill Zirinsky will be engaging with Demo Rinpoche with questions and curiosity about Demo Rinpoche's life journey, his spiritual beliefs and practices, his personal interests and daily life, and his comments about life in southeastern Michigan. He will also invite active audience comments and questions.

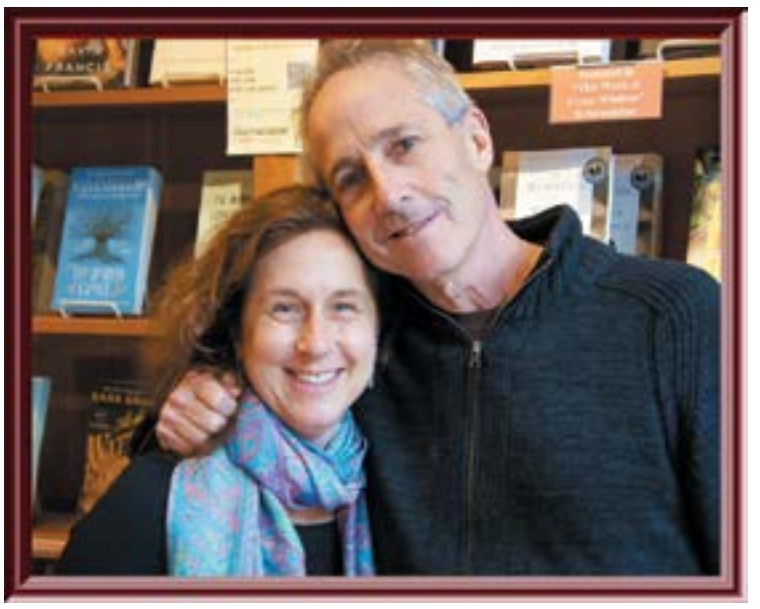
**Free. Crazy Wisdom Bookstore, 114 South Main Street, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104**
**www.crazywisdomjournal.com • www.crazywisdom.net • www.crazywisdombookstore.com**
**For more information, email: billz@crazywisdom.net**
**or chandra@crazywisdombookstore.com**

# Chandra Mitchel: Shepherding Crazy Wisdom Bookstore into its Next Era

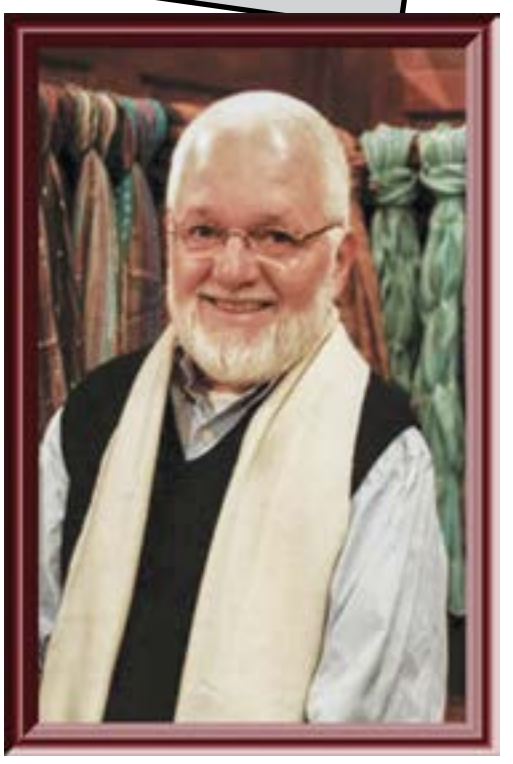


114 S. Main Street

Aura Glaser



Ruth Schekter and Bill Zirinsky



Jon Ellis

*In 1982, Aura Glaser created Crazy Wisdom Bookstore, which she located on East Ann Street. She moved the store to North Fourth Avenue in 1984, down the street from the People's Food Co-op. Glaser sold the bookstore to Jonathan Ellis and Bill Zirinsky in 1989. Jon Ellis departed after four months but remained a trusted mentor. The next year, Ruth Schekter moved from NYC to Ann Arbor to live with her then-boyfriend, Bill Zirinsky. Zirinsky and Schekter grew the store, along with longtime managers Carol Karr and Sarah Newland, deeply expanding its book sections. In 1995, the Crazy Wisdom Journal started. In 1999, they moved the store into a building they had bought and renovated, at its present location on Main Street. The bookstore added a Tea Room and also began hosting all sorts of events on its second floor, including live music, poetry and storytelling nights, witches' nights out, fairy teas for kids, drum circles, book talks and author events, Salon evenings, and a multitude of classes and workshops in its meeting room.*

*The bookstore closed for six months during the pandemic, and reopened without the Tea Room. The store closed again in 2022, at a time when Zirinsky and Schekter decided they were ready for a change. They began searching for a younger person to carry the bookstore forward. They enlisted former bookstore manager, Rachel Pastiva (currently the director of Friends of the Ann Arbor Public Library), and eventually found a warm-hearted, kind, capable and motivated new manager, Chandra Mitchel, and reopened in late 2023. In 2024, the second floor was lovingly renovated as an events space without food and beverage service, and re-christened "the Celestial Lounge," and they added an Art Gallery on the second floor.*

*A few months ago, in June 2025, Bill Zirinsky and Ruth Schekter licensed Chandra Mitchel, and her partner, Jon Rothenberg, to run Crazy Wisdom Bookstore, selling them the retail inventory, and leasing to them the bookstore's first floor and lower level. Crazy Wisdom, Inc., Zirinsky and Schekter's company, which has owned the bookstore and the publications, will continue to publish* The Crazy Wisdom Journal, The Crazy Wisdom Monthly, *and the* Ann Arbor Holistic *website. Crazy Wisdom, Inc., will also continue to publish a Weekly e-Blast for its thousands of subscribers, and to maintain its websites and social media presence. The Second Floor at 114 S. Main Street will be managed by Crazy Wisdom Bookstore (Chandra and Jon) in collaboration with Crazy Wisdom, Inc., (Bill and Ruth).*

Photo by J. Adrian Wylie

## Rachel Pastiva, Chandra Mitchel, and Bill Zirinsky

*To help launch Chandra Mitchel in her new role as the shepherd of Crazy Wisdom Bookstore, we wanted our readers to get to know her a bit. An interview with her follows…*

**You are now spearheading Crazy Wisdom Bookstore. You follow in the footsteps of Aura Glaser, Jonathan Ellis, and then Bill Zirinsky and Ruth Schekter. What are your hopes for the bookstore under your stewardship?**

I feel incredibly honored to be stewarding such a beloved and iconic space. For over three decades, Bill & Ruth tended Crazy Wisdom with reverence and love, creating a true sanctuary. It's an honor to walk in their footsteps, and I am so grateful to them for all of their support and for the opportunity. My hope is to carry forward their legacy while gently evolving the space to meet the needs of a new generation. I want Crazy Wisdom Bookstore to remain a haven for spiritual exploration and conscious living. I want it to remain a place of discovery: for books, for healing, for treasures, and for one's own inner journey.

**You were the manager of the store since it reopened in December 2023. What most struck you about the store during the time you were manager? And what was most interesting about the store's customer base?**

What struck me most was how deeply loved this place is and how emotionally attached people are to the bookstore. People walk in with stories—first dates in the Tea Room, marriage proposals on the sales floor, or just that time they found the *exact* book they didn't know they needed. Our customers are curious, open-hearted, and beautifully diverse. Some have been coming for decades; others wander in for the first time and instantly feel amazed. It's a privilege to serve this community.

**The store's tagline under Bill and Ruth was "a bookstore about consciousness." What did that tagline mean to you in the past, and in what ways might that tagline continue to define your purpose? Or will Crazy Wisdom Bookstore be getting a new tag line?**

I love the tag line. To me, "a bookstore about consciousness" suggests a place where transformation is always possible—through a book, a conversation, a class, or an intuitive reading. As we move forward, we may play with new language that reflects our current voice and intentions, but that core message—supporting awareness, growth, and soulful living—will remain central.

**The bookstore had a strong focus on Buddhism and other spiritual traditions, including pagan and earth religions, psychological growth and body-mind therapies, integrative medicine and holistic health and healing, conscious living, sustainability, womenspirit, and mindfulness. Among those subject areas, do you feel particularly passionate about any of them? Are there other subject areas that you hope to grow and build on?**

I feel particularly connected to nature-based spirituality and the divine feminine. And as a long-time jewelry artist working with crystals and sacred symbols, I see art as a spiritual practice. As far as subject areas that I hope to grow and build on, I'm passionate about making space for underrepresented voices, whether that's BIPOC teachers, queer mystics, feminine viewpoints, or newer intersections of science and spirituality.

**How will your sidelines (jewelry, art, crystals, incense, candles, instruments, etc.) be the same and what will be different? What are you most excited about, with respect to the sidelines?**

We'll continue to offer what people love—beautiful crystals, handcrafted jewelry, incense, candles, singing bowls, sacred tools, and all the goodies people expect from Crazy Wisdom Bookstore—but I'm excited to place a greater focus on fair trade and ethical sourcing. Something new I am delighted to be adding to the store are some beautiful vintage items such as spiritual/religious statues and art.

**Will you continue to hold events upstairs on the second floor?**

Yes! Upstairs will remain a community gathering space and we will continue to offer classes, author events, art exhibitions, music nights, workshops, and other gatherings. In addition, it will be available for private party rentals.

**Will you continue to have intuitive and tarot readers working at Crazy Wisdom Bookstore?**

Absolutely. Our intuitives, mediums, and tarot readers are vital to the spirit of Crazy Wisdom Bookstore.

**Please tell us a bit about your work life in the years before working at Crazy Wisdom.**

Before Crazy Wisdom Bookstore, I wore many hats: I co-founded a bodycare company where I handled everything from operations to social media to sales. Before that, I served as General Manager of a provisioning center where I led a team of 20+ and helped shape employee education programming and community events. I've also worked as an Executive Assistant where I supported partners and clients, built systems, and managed content. While my children were small, I managed our family farm and was a jewelry artist for over 25 years. Looking back, it feels like all those threads were leading me here.

**Do you have kids, and if so, what are their names and ages, and please tell us about them?**

Yes, I have three daughters. Zenah is 31, married, and works as a senior program manager in NYC. Yakirah is 23 and is a senior paralegal at an immigration law firm in NYC. And Avivah, who's 20, is a college student studying elementary education in Detroit, who sometimes works at the store! I am so grateful to share my life with them—they are easy to love, they are thoughtful, empathetic, determined, and intelligent. I learn so much from their perspectives.

**Who is Jon Rothenberg, and what role will he play?**

Jon is my fiancé and partner at Crazy Wisdom Bookstore. He brings years of experience as a financial advisor and business strategist. While I'm focused on the creative, operational, and community-facing aspects of the store, Jon is helping behind the scenes making sure Crazy Wisdom Bookstore not only survives, but thrives.

# A Look at Great Lakes Performing Artists Associates

## A Champion for Human Connection Through Music

By Christine MacIntyre

As arts funding dwindles and screens pull audiences away from live experiences, one Ann Arbor nonprofit is quietly transforming the cultural landscape with soul and purpose. For nearly five decades, Great Lakes Performing Artist Associates (GLPAA) has championed real human connection through music.

This is not just another arts nonprofit. GLPAA is part talent agency, part mentorship incubator, and part community outreach engine. It's where young artists are not just given a platform, but also the guidance and support they need to launch their careers. Unlike traditional booking agencies that cater solely to large venues and commercial interests, GLPAA takes a more holistic approach to its services. It provides guidance, support, and opportunity to artists across the Great Lakes region.

***A Legacy That Began With a Question***

Theodore Lettvin, a piano professor at the University of Michigan, founded GLPAA. He wanted to support his students after they graduated, so he set out to help them find performing opportunities in the region.

Matchmaking was the name of the game in the early days, as artists needed opportunities to perform, and communities were hungry for art but often lacked the means or access to performers. GLPAA stepped in to bridge the gap. Over the past 47 years, that simple mission grew into a full-service nonprofit.

Initially, many of the artists were soloists and small classical chamber groups. However, executive director Amanda Stanger-Read stated that they've grown significantly over the years, embracing a diverse array of musical styles, including jazz, folk, and world music ensembles from across the Midwest. Today, GLPAA represents a diverse roster of musicians, helps guide young artists through various aspects of their careers, and organizes performances for them. And through it all, GLPAA stayed true to its roots—helping artists thrive in a tough industry and bring more music to the world.

**GLPAA is part talent agency, part mentorship incubator, and part community outreach engine.**

***The Artist Roster: A Tapestry of Talent***

Take a glance at GLPAA's current artist roster and you'll see an eclectic, carefully curated mix of talent. There are classically trained pianists and gospel ensembles, jazz quartets, and genre-defying fusion groups. What unites them isn't genre or style—it's passion, professionalism, and a desire to connect with audiences in meaningful ways.

Pianist Michelle Cann, for example, has drawn national attention for her breathtaking performances of Florence Price's compositions—long-neglected works by the first African American woman to have her music played by a major orchestra. Cann's interpretations are acts of reclamation and celebration.

Violinist Eliot Heaton, now concertmaster of the Michigan Opera Theatre Orchestra, is another standout. The roster also includes groups like the Sirius Quartet, known for seamlessly weaving classical, jazz, and experimental sounds into something wholly original, and the Grammy-nominated Black gospel ensemble Nikki D and the Sisters of Thunder, whose performances blur the lines between church, concert, and revival meetings, captivating audiences across the region with their electrifying energy.

These gifted performers are also educators, innovators, and storytellers who deeply care about connecting with audiences and are willing to venture boldly where others may be hesitant to even explore.

***Mentorships & Business Education Occur Behind-the-Scenes***

Some GLPAA's most significant work occurs offstage. Stanger-Read explained that her daily responsibilities involve reaching out to regional presenters to provide updates about artists and their availability. They collaborate with venues of all sizes, including clubs, historic theaters, colleges, libraries, museums, and more.

Once an artist auditions to join the organization's roster, they're transformed into marketable, knowledgeable, and sustainable artists. Stanger-Read researches performance opportunities and takes time to understand artists'

**Carpe Diem String Quartet**

Photo by Josie V. Photography

**Abigail Stauffer and the Wisdom**

work, assisting them in crafting their image and building a brand. Many young or emerging artists desperately need this professional mentorship but rarely receive it. GLPAA enables them to learn the tools of the trade, including the tedious task of navigating contracts and building portfolios. It's the kind of behind-the-scenes support that can mean the difference between burnout and breakthrough.

"I really love to practice my instrument, read about music, listen to music, study music, rehearse with friends, compose, and create music. I was trained to do all those things, but what I wasn't trained to do was find gigs. Being a working artist is like running a small business, and that's exactly what this organization helps with. It connects musicians, launches their careers, and provides the support system needed to find the gigs that allow them to continue doing what they love," said Andrew Bishop, a musician, composer, and educator who serves on GLPAA's board. Without guidance, connections, and a support system, it can be challenging to persevere, no matter how much talent one possesses. This is where GLPAA steps in.

**The roster also includes groups like the Sirius Quartet, known for seamlessly weaving classical, jazz, and experimental sounds into something wholly original, and the Grammy-nominated Black gospel ensemble Nikki D and the Sisters of Thunder, whose performances blur the lines between church, concert, and revival meetings, captivating audiences across the region with their electrifying energy.**

***Supported Artists Support School-Aged Youth***

Board member Kristi Bishop shared her thoughts on the importance of accessibility in the arts, stating, "Music is not always equitable in every school district. GLPAA makes opportunities possible with programs like the Caravan program, where artists visit Title 1 schools." These programs are entirely free to the schools and range from demonstration performances for the entire student body to focused workshops for band and orchestra students. In some cases, CARAVANs even include several-day residencies that culminate in side-by-side performance opportunities for school ensembles. These initiatives enhance the student's experience but also help the artists adapt their typical concert programs for young audiences.

**Mr. B and his piano bike.**

# Great Lakes Performing Artists Associates

*continued...*

## Grammy-nominated Black gospel ensemble Nikki D and the Sisters of Thunder

***Musical Moments: A Fundraiser with Heart***

Each spring, GLPAA hosts a benefit event called Musical Moments—Art to the Rescue, and this year's gathering was a masterclass on what makes the organization special. Held in May at the Michigan Firehouse Museum in Ypsilanti, the event was intentionally informal, immersive, and full of enthusiasm. Guests wandered among vintage fire trucks and historical exhibits while live music filled the space—sometimes softly in the background, other times erupting in a joyful crescendo.

The performances were as varied as the artists themselves. Blues and boogie pianist Mr. B set a toe-tapping tone early on. Then came the ethereal, genre-blending sound of AgawDilim, followed by the lyrical, expressive violin of Henrik Karapetyan. Singer-songwriter Abigail Stauffer delivered an intimate folk-pop set. The evening closed with the roof-raising gospel sounds of Nikki D and the Sisters of Thunder—a performance so powerful it could be described as a religious experience, whether you believe in God or the power of art or something else entirely. As gospel singer Nikki D said during her set, "Don't give up on your dream. Don't give up on your aspirations. Don't give up on that book you want to write, that band you want to start, that project you've been putting off. The world needs what you have."

**Each spring, GLPAA hosts a benefit event called Musical Moments—Art to the Rescue, and this year's gathering was a masterclass on what makes the organization special.**

But music wasn't the only thing highlighted that night. The event featured local food and drink donated or discounted by businesses that believe in GLPAA's mission. Attendees sampled bites from Basil Babe, Moon Winks Tavern, Busch's, Casablanca, and Beara Bakes, among others. A silent auction added another layer of excitement with prizes ranging from handmade glass art to Detroit Tigers suite tickets, ballroom dance lessons, and curated gift baskets. Every dollar raised went directly toward supporting GLPAA's programming and artists.

**Spring 2025 fundraiser**

Photo by Christine MacIntyre

***The Hard Truth: Funding the Arts Is Hard Work***

The event was a joyful evening filled with music and camaraderie underscoring a vital message: GLPAA needs support. "It takes $150,000 to run this organization for one year," said GLPAA board secretary Deborah Katz. Approximately 40% of GLPAA's income comes from grants and donations, historically from the Michigan Arts and Culture Council, which is funded by the State and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). "It's been a tough year for us: funding has been pulled and grants have been eliminated. We can't support artists, and they can't perform for kids in schools or senior centers without the necessary funds," Katz explained.

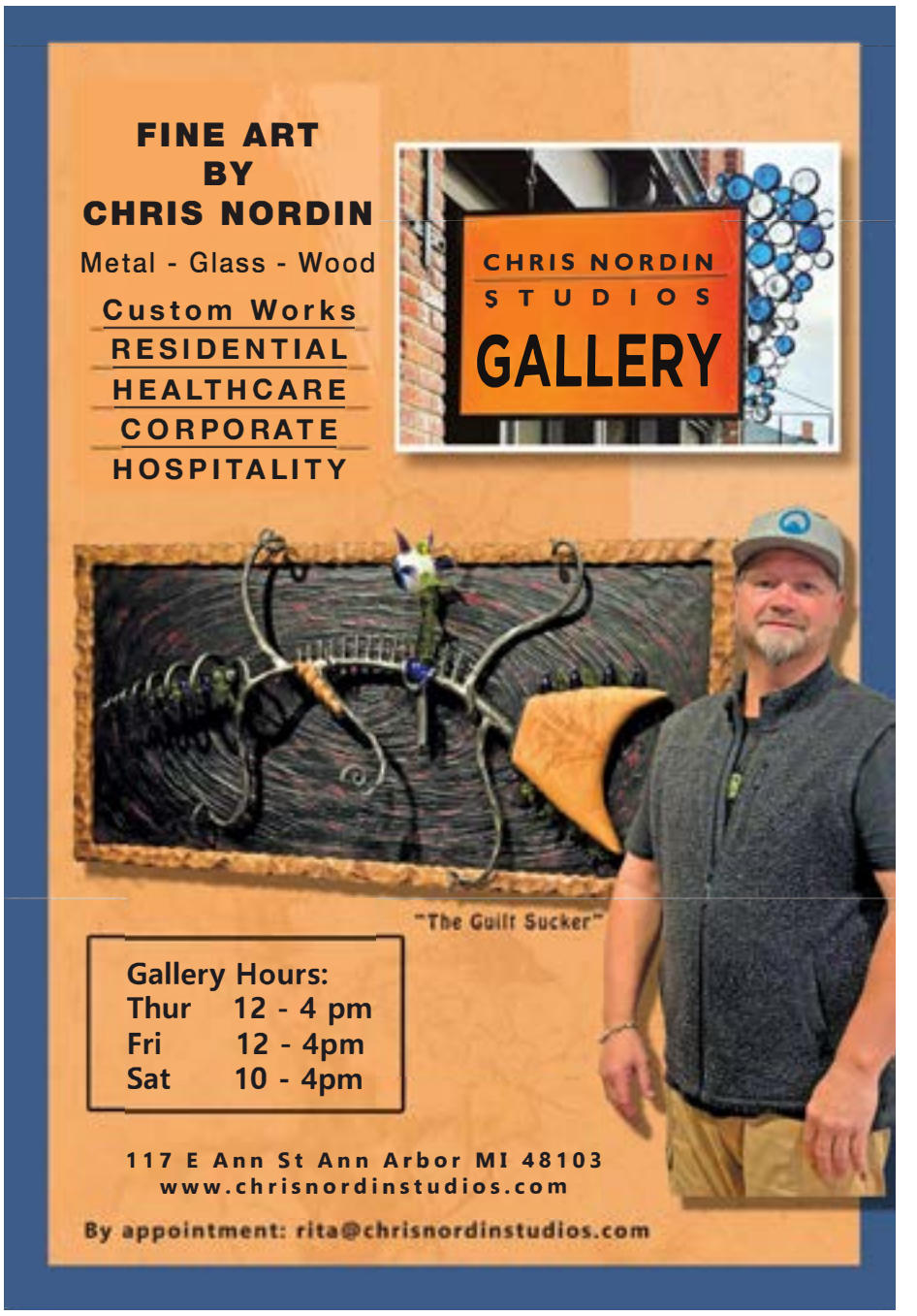
Board member Kristi Bishop emphasized the urgency of the situation: "The arts help us and musicians continue to find beauty in the world. There are many demands on our finances, but I don't want our musicians to lose out." For some artists, GLPAA serves as a lifeline; for others, it's a launchpad. For everyone involved, it's a reminder that art is not optional—it's essential. Although the fundraiser was a success raising an additional $14,000 for the organization, Stanger-Read actively seeks new sources of grant money.

***Looking Ahead: A Future in Harmony***

As GLPAA looks toward its 50th anniversary, the organization is not just reflecting on its past—it's envisioning its future. Plans are underway to expand its outreach into more rural communities, deepen partnerships with schools, and launch a new artist development program that pairs emerging musicians with mentors and career coaches.

Whether you're a music lover, a philanthropist, a school administrator, or just someone who believes in beauty and creativity, there's a role for you in GLPAA's story. You can donate. You can attend a concert. You can volunteer. You can become a board member. But most importantly, you can believe in the power of art to heal, inspire, and connect. Because, in the end, that's what GLPAA is about. Not just notes on a page but moments that matter.

*To learn more about Great Lakes Performing Artist Associates, explore upcoming performances, or make a donation, visit www.greatlakespaa.org or on Facebook @GreatLakesPAA. You can also contact them by phone at (734) 276-8558 or email at glpaaoffice@gmail.com.*

# Kindred Conversations

## with Hilary Nichols

## Jamall Bufford, Director of Washtenaw My Brother's Keeper

As the Director of Washtenaw My Brother's Keeper (WMBK), Jamall Buf ford makes a powerful impression of warmth and conviction. "Everyone sees his heart," his colleague Justin Harper said. "Jamall is a great person. It is easy to work with him because he is a good listener, a team player, and completely true to his convictions. When someone has those qualities, a lot of great things can happen."

Jamall Bufford is committed to making a lot of great things happen. My Brother's Keeper (MBK) is a national initiative launched by Barack Obama in 2014. The overarching mission is to establish career pathways for boys and young men of color by empowering an intergenerational community. The program designates a monthly event called 50 Strong Breakfast on the second Saturday of the month to inspire mentorship and fellowship amongst Black and brown youth and professionals. A specified topic each event builds life skills such as financial literacy, skilled trades, Black history, expository writing, and more. The Washtenaw County affiliate launched in 2015. Bufford was asked to be on the steering committee after attending one of their monthly breakfast events. When the director position opened in 2019, Bufford was ready to step up. He didn't stop at breakfast.

Bufford stretched WMBK's outreach into the fields of music, sports, social justice, and leadership training throughout the county, going into schools, community halls, and youth centers on any given day. His vision is still expanding. My approach is to build a relationship with the students. I want to reach them where they are."

In 2019 Bufford had recently returned from living in Los Angeles where his musical career had carried him. His passion for writing bars started with his Huron High School crew, including Andrew Mayer Cohen, now well-known as Grammy-nominated solo artist Mayer Hawthorne. The group went pro as the Athletic Mic League releasing three albums together, before Bufford went solo as Buff 1 in 2007. His two solo albums *Pure* and *There's Only One* received critical acclaim. The sound is lush, complex, powerful, and articulate, with a blend of classic and unique lyricism, intelligent and important messages, layered over alluring harmonies and heat. Those early successes compelled him to spend a year as a performing musician touring nationally and internationally, sharing the stage with some of the biggest artists in the Rap genre.

For about two years on the road, he was touring successfully. "Bookers loved us," he said. "Cause the crowds loved us." Listed in the top 100 of *URB MAGAZINE,* and top 25 Rap Artists nationally by *OK-THO*, Buff 1 was named the best solo rap artist of the year by *Real Detroit Weekly.* "I was living my dream," he told me. But then everything changed. "The scene started to slow down." He said, "So, I had to make a decision. I didn't go to LA to work a 9-5, so I came home in 2010." When his friend Mike Hyter (a.k.a Man In Charge) was called to chase his own rap career, he suggested that Bufford take over his position at the Neutral Zone.

"I fell in love with it. I fell in love with sharing my love of Hip Hop with teens." He advanced at Neutral Zone into the coordinator of all the music programs, and Youth Owned Record Label lead from 2010-2016. He then took his love for music education into the schools when a teacher friend at Tappan Middle School urged him to come work as a paraprofessional in the Special Education department, particularly to reach one disengaged student. "I saw the seeds of the 'prison to pipeline' being planted with young Black and brown boys at Tappan." It was a wakeup call. "I learned a lot from that experience. I knew that the hip-hop programming and the restorative justice work we implemented at Neutral Zone could make a difference there." They cobbled together a studio and allowed the students to engineer, write, compose, and to express. Bufford understood how therapeutic the act of making music could be. His inputs succeeded. The troubled student advanced from special-ed to the honor roll for the first time in program history. But for Bufford, the school system environment wasn't sustainable.

As director, Bufford was ready to innovate. He knew they had to make the school environment more aligned, more suited, more of a homebase for the social/emotional curriculum to take hold. "We had to keep them in the building," he said.

His vocation in education didn't deter him from his music career. "It was just that I didn't have anywhere to record." He was still writing and creating his own work. "Then I ran into a friend, rapper MaGestik LeGend." They had performed together in the early 2000s. "He had a studio in his home," Bufford recounted. They came up with the name The Black Opera. Their shows were a unique theatrical presentation. "We didn't want to reveal our identities. We did wardrobe changes, wore masks, and had intermissions." Again, Bufford toured the US and Europe from 2011-2018. The Black Opera became an artist collective with contributions from talents such as Cedrick Umoja, who did live

painting, and vocalist Dani Darling among others. The album, *African America* is presented on Bandcamp as Ssocial conscious hip-hop—the self-described story of people who feel lost, disconnected from their heritage, and unwelcome at home. When he released *Ghost II,* "The inspiration to write came when I learned of the murder of activist Oluwatoyin Salua." The common theme of social justice is compelling and heart wrenching. Fans still find Buff 1's deep collection of sounds on Spotify, BandCamp, SoundCloud, and many music videos on The Black Opera YouTube channel. Even with critical success in the music world, "It was a hustle." From his song "Dreamin Streets" his lyrics say it all:

*I hustle 'cause these streets feel like I am locked in hell.*
*So many souls printed in the snow tracks*
*little did he know that he was getting fitted for toe tags*
*So many jump man logos and Tim trees*
*So many young men postponed in them streets*
*Intrigued by the speed the life provides em*
*Emcees writing things they might can die from*
*I believe you speak things into existence*
*So, I breathe and speak dreams into the sentence*
*Close your eyes and imagine, whatever you fathom you can grab it.*
*You want sadness, you can have it. You want happiness then have at it.*

In 2018, a friend invited Bufford to a WMBK summit event at EMU. "They were talking about the state of young Black and brown students in the area. I gravitated toward it." With his passion and experience Bufford was a great addition to the conversation. Promoted from committee member to director, Bufford was a natural fit. "I finally found full time employment at a wage that allowed me to do the work that I had been focused on for years." Right away he identified what was working and what needed more attention. "We had to find ways to connect more to the youth in the community, to get inside the schools." As director, Bufford was ready to innovate. He knew they had to make the school environment more aligned, more suited, more of a homebase for the social/emotional curriculum to take hold. "We had to keep them in the building," he said.

Ypsi and Scarlett Middle schools expressed a need. In the beginning, "It was just me." Bufford shared. "I would use my training with restorative circles and bring in guests to share various career paths." Principal Gerald Vazquez at Scarlett Middle School recognized his gift straight away. "His ability to connect and build camaraderie in front of young people is remarkable," Vasquez shared with me. "He is honest and genuine and able to engender trust quickly where others haven't." The program has doubled over the years. "The impact has been immeasurable. Initially, he inspired kids to come to school just to be here for after school. He engages the students with the things they want to do," Principal Vasquez reported. DJing and rap are the pathway, while increased academic involvement is the outcome. "Jamall has been a huge asset here, mentoring

**Bufford stretched WMBK's outreach into the fields of music, sports, social justice, and leadership training throughout the county, going into schools, community halls, and youth centers on any given day. His vision is still expanding. My approach is to build a relationship with the students. I want to reach them where they are."**

young men to navigate some of their challenges; they've really developed grit and perseverance."

The Ann Arbor Community Foundation found out about these successes and offered an early financial lift. They wanted to put money toward the movement. WMBK, with Bufford at the helm, quickly expanded its offerings to integrate ideas with interests. The new programming amplified their music, sports, and academic approaches for a more effective fit.

Young Men of Purpose was created in partnership with Mentor2Youth, Parkridge Community Center, and Christian Love Fellowship Church to support social/emotional life skills at the middle school level through academics, leadership, college and career readiness to encourage high school transition. CLR Academy (Community, Leadership, Revolution) is a free youth sports academy that offers restorative justice, conflict resolution, and mindful techniques such as meditation, journaling, and yoga, along with nutrition education all wrapped around a sampling of sports, to bring programming right into the field. "We use sports as the hook to offer problem solving and life skills in real time," Justin Harper, a member of the WMBK steering committee shared. Harper loved what Bufford was offering. "He was telling me all the cool things he was doing through these programs. Those are things I always wanted to do." The practices have made real measurable change in the district. "Kids that were frustrated when they would lose a game or mess up, now have deep breathing, yoga, and mindfulness practices to approach these moments," Harper said. "The parents express their joy, witnessing their kids' improved actions and their attitudes."

Formula 734 is the newest project of WMBK, inviting participants into Grove Street Recording studio to encourage musical ideas, expression, and performance capacity while providing social/emotional support and fellowship. Bufford's mission has taken him into both tough spots and bright places. Formula 734 has a travelling recording studio to deepen their outreach. In partnership with Eli Saavat and the County Prosecutor's office, WMBK developed diversion programming. "Instead of going through the court system some of these young people are diverted through our program," Bufford explained. "I build relationships through the music. Some of their writing might not be beautiful at first. It can be angry and aggressive." His approach encourages their honest expression. He doesn't limit their use of language. Bufford creates a safe space first. "So, they can be vulnerable to talk about things that they are not comfortable sharing in general areas." It is a strategy that works. "We start with what they are feeling, what they are going through. Before steering them in a more positive direction."

Jamall Bufford is pointed in a positive direction and not stopping anytime soon. He has found partnerships, foundations, grants, and funding sources, before dreaming up the next big vision. Now his big dream is to locate all these various programs under one roof. WMBK is looking for a homebase. I would not doubt, a goal set for Bufford is a goal met. His colleague Justin Harper affirmed my sentiment, "I believe he's a great person, placed in this position to do great things." The path isn't effortless, but it is inspired. You can trace it from his lyrics. "Close your eyes and imagine, whatever you fathom you can grab it. You want sadness, you can have it. You want happiness then have at it."

*Find out more information on the offerings of Washtenaw My Brother's Keeper online at washtenawmbk.org/events. You can explore the musical content of Buff 1 and the Black Opera here at youtube.com/@TheBlackOpera or on Spotify at open.spotify.com/artist/5bBEAb0OfNmdXbinRi8WXk?si=56tHMnFjSeSUwMldfDkPuwtheblackoperamusic.bandcamp.com/album/african-america.*

# Kindred Conversations continued...

## Jonathan Buckman of Elixir Therapy

### "What does normal even mean?"

Jonathan Buckman asked. Buckman is not normal—he is unique and extraordinary by any measure, and that is what makes him such a great therapist, social worker, practitioner, neighbor, and friend. "Jonathan has attained master level accomplishments in so many domains, but you would never guess it if you were meeting him for the first time," his bandmate, neighbor, and co-conspirator Jeff Gladchun told me. "You couldn't ask for a better friend than Jonathan. He is one of a kind."

"If everyone is unique, what are we even trying to fit into?" It is with this central question that Buckman begins his query as a therapist. "Some randomly invented, made-up and culturally perceived norm?" He asked. "Why? When that so often becomes the source of our self-worth issues." He faces these concerns with clients of all ages to address the impacts of the outdated constructs. "Societal norms are the jail of our own making. We concoct a complex ego as both strategy and protection. But often that is where troubles begin, when we serve the group dynamic and abandon ourselves in the process."

Jonathan Buckman began his career teaching at a New York City Charter School where he was responsible for tutoring math and reading, designing curriculum, and coaching a nationally ranked chess team. He and his wife Rachel Frey moved closer to her Michigan roots in 2013 to settle down and start their own family. Their son Emory was born in 2017. While Buckman was teaching at the Detroit Achievement Academy, he realized that his specialty was working with his students one on one, in small reading groups, and in his chess club. "That's when I had to leave the classroom," Buckman recounted. His wife, Frey, was a social worker. Buckman admired how revolutionary social work was historically. The first social welfare agencies appeared in the 1800s to confront the problems of poverty and inequality. The field continues to bring our nation's social problems into the public's eye.

Buckman pursued his master's in social work (MSW/LMSW) from the University of Michigan, and began his therapist practice here in Ann Arbor, at the Still Waters counseling center in 2018. His special interest was in mindfulness, attachment theory, narrative informed therapy, play therapy, and psychedelic assisted therapy. Buckman always positioned himself on the cutting edge of the therapeutic approach. "I resist the modern definitions of what constitutes therapy," Buckman said. "I think therapy can be so much more flexible than what it's been." After seven years in the traditional role, his orientation shifted toward 'anti-therapy'. This is not his term, but a growing movement to expand what can be considered therapeutic beyond the confines of traditional talk therapy.

Recently, Johnathan Buckman introduced his new private practice, Elixir Therapy, to facilitate transformation through holistic wisdom. Designed to be short term, intensive, and bespoke, Buckman utilizes many human technologies such as meditation, tai-chi, sorcery, IFS (Internal Family Systems), and play therapy to custom fit each client's temperament. "With daily support, we integrate a new behavior into long term memory," Buckman explained. His innovative offerings are effective, with the goal that his clients won't need therapy long term. His flagship approach begins by identifying something that is really important to the client. "Together we work to articulate how they want to feel. And then the action necessary to achieve that. And then we do that every single day." By phone, texting, or in-person, Buckman supports his clients for at least 21 consecutive days of doing, so that the practice is embedded. "You have to do something every day consistently for it to become an entrenched element of who you are. Then you have hacked your system," he shared.

The "21-day rule" supported by neuroscience posits that it takes three weeks for a new behavior to become ingrained. Buckman expanded the reasoning behind this rule, "Otherwise the knowledge gets neurally pruned." His practice flips the format of a one-hour weekly session. "That is something that is missing from modern therapy, they aren't offering daily support. Do something every day for 30 minutes, it will get you there." Whether you're trying to learn a new instrument, or a new language, "What is more crucial than relearning our relationship with self?" he asked. "This new boost in ability and accountability becomes the catalyst for lasting internal change."

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Initially, he seeks to understand his client's belief system. "What is your view on the nature of the universe and how does that make you feel?" Then they co-create an approach that is informed and fine-tuned to fit. The process of articulation can be truly revelatory and therapeutic. "I realized how important it was to express their big picture, based on my own spiritual awakening," Buckman shared. His own upbringing wasn't particularly religious, but while struggling with a serious bout of depression Buckman had a defining experience that he credits as the source of his understanding. "I was so distraught, and thought if there is a way, I am ready to die right now. I just didn't want to exist. Lying there, I felt like I left my body. Lifted, like I was moving toward an infinite

orb of energy that was a source of boundless love. I knew inherently that this is what created the universe and all matter in it. I just knew it was the origin of everything." Buckman doesn't share this vision that informed his belief system lightly. He continued, "In that moment, through this infinite loving presence, I realized I signed up for this. I had chosen to be here, to be embodied, in this life, in this time. And that changed everything for me. I became a different person."

His study of martial arts, Taoism, Buddhism, and Christianity influenced his spiritual practice and furthered his interest in philosophy and esoteric pursuits. Buckman cites his biggest influences as UG Krishnamurti, Michel Foucault, Carlos Castaneda, and Taisha Abelar. The next logical step in self-exploration led him to psychedelic-assisted exploration.

"That's when psychedelics entered the equation. I found that early experimenting very helpful." Buckman thanks Dr. Rick Strassman for affirming the positive impact of such exploration. Dr Strassman, a professor of psychiatry at the University of New Mexico School of Medicine is the author of the book *The Spirit Molecule*. His book details a five-year government-funded clinical research project on DMT, with human subjects in experimental conditions. DMT is the entheogenic drug N,N-Dimethyltryptamine. Buckman was moved. "I left my body, and the visions were realer than real."

Experiencing, seeing, feeling, and interacting with beings from other realms is a common report of those who have undergone psychedelic treatments. "The universe is so much more wildly creative and complex than I could have ever imagined." Buckman credits these experiences for a seismic shift in his mindset. "DMT is one of the most important therapeutic and healing discoveries that western culture has uncovered. That is why it is sometimes referred to as 'the God molecule.'" Buckman still seemed astonished as he told me, "It felt like proof, that if we let go and accept the invitation into this internal travel, we can access just a glimpse of the mystery."

Jonathan Buckman has a lot to share. After his martial arts dojo shut down, he still wanted to keep practicing Tai Chi, so he decided to share his own home for a weekly community practice. One evening a week, rain or shine, he hosts a 'push-hands' practice in his carport for anyone who would like to join. Push-hands is a two-person Tai Chi training technique that can be competitive or casual, serious or fun. At Buckman's weekly gathering of 10-15 practitioners and friends, it is all that and then some. He sets out drinks and snacks and an eclectic playlist as he opens the interplay. His only instruction is that there are no instructions, "Anything goes. There are no rules, as long as you meet your partner where they are." Simple and profound, subtle and sublime, there is a very low bar for entry and yet what there is to learn is limitless. Two simply match hands to mirror a dynamic-tension in this strategic technique. As a tai chi practitioner of over ten years, Josh Meisler shared, "Joining up with Jonathan is the best thing that has happened to my practice all year."

Palm to palm, I first encountered Buckman through this practice. He is tall and forceful but immediately I met his light heart. Sensitive to more than just push, he finds the play, taking the practice from a martial art to more of a free-flowing form. The give and take, lead and follow, compete and collaboration in each action correlates with his therapeutic beliefs beautifully.

> "Societal norms are the jail of our own making. We concoct a complex ego as both strategy and protection. But often that is where troubles begin, when we serve the group dynamic and abandon ourselves in the process."
>
> —Jonathan Buckman

In his carport, Buckman displays a poster of the *Taoist Inner Alchemy Chart —The Relationship of Body Mind and Spirit*. "Deep in-breath, then breath-out to your fingertips, as you bring your arms out to shoulder height. Now arch your upper spine to engage your solar plexus here," he instructed. Buckman points out the places on the chart that correspond to my internal system as he leads me through a series of movements, stretches, and breath work to build and move energy. "Inhale to fill like a balloon. Now let it sink into your core," he continued. As I followed along, he cheered for me. "Yes, just like that." My tensions dissolved and I found myself dropping into alignment. "You feel that?" He asked excitedly.

"I do." A buzz emanated throughout my body. "That is the 'golden elixir,'" he explained, as he led me through the exercises.

Buckman's lifelong interest in martial arts and eastern teaching clearly motivates his work. He wants his clients to understand and access their own internal strength, both mental and physical. "He is the most enthusiastic and encouraging therapist I have ever witnessed," said his colleague and friend Catherine Fritz, LLPC. Fritz co-facilitated a six-week course for neuro-divergent adolescents with Buckman and witnessed his unique touch. "He is one of the most patient people I have ever met. He can build strong rapport because he is so adaptable and responsive, with such a variety of options." To help reset escalations or upset, Buckman played chess, did tai chi, or just sat with these teens, helping to teach kids how to regulate themselves. Fritz recounted an example of one teen that had discouraged his parents, teachers, and past therapists. "This kid was angry as a baseline. He was aggressive and destructive. Most people move away from that kind of behavior to distance themselves from such outbursts, but Jonathan has a way of moving toward them." By the end of the course the teen was playing chess and learning how to play the piano.

"He has the sort of personality that, when he enjoys something, he goes all out," his bandmate Jeff Gladchun shared. "Jonathan's influence reaches far, wide, and deep. His authenticity, kindness, and willingness to be involved, is really quite amazing." Engaging, intensive, and effective, Elixir Therapy is Jonathan Buckman. "What I am sharing is myself," he affirmed. And that is something extraordinary.

*You can inquire about Elixir Therapy and Jonathan Buckman online at Elixirtherapy.org or contact him at 917-658-7652 or elixirtherapymi@gmail.com.*

# Wild Wellness at Mother Bear SANCTUARY and Retreat Center

By Cashmere Morley

Barbra White, co-founder of Mother Bear Sanctuary and Retreat Center, believes that all living beings are deeply interconnected. "It's kismet," she explained, that just as she was longing to spread the word about her retreat center, which opened in 2018, *The Crazy Wisdom Journal* came calling for an interview. "I feel like I've been in a cooking pot for 30 years in this work, but here, specifically with Mother Bear Sanctuary for the last eight years, I feel like I'm saying to the universe, 'I'm ready. I'm ready.' So when [the *Journal*] called, I thought, 'kismet.'"

Mother Bear Sanctuary, similar to a mother bear found in the wild, protects and honors each person and animal that finds their way to the sprawling ten-acre compound. Founded as both a working animal sanctuary and a retreat center, White and her partner, Dave Tuscany, host a variety of programs designed to heal trauma, build community, and inspire reconnection with the natural world. At Mother Bear, it's believed that everyone carries a "Mother Bear" within—an inner guardian ready to awaken and protect the sacred both inside and around them. From ecological therapy and embodiment workshops to firewalking ceremonies and present-based healing with rescue animals, Mother Bear's offerings are grounded in the belief that personal wellness and planetary wellness are inseparable.

**AT MOTHER BEAR, IT'S BELIEVED THAT EVERYONE CARRIES A "MOTHER BEAR" WITHIN–AN INNER GUARDIAN READY TO AWAKEN AND PROTECT THE SACRED BOTH INSIDE AND AROUND THEM.**

"These [principles] are so simple, but they are so lost in today's society. These are ideas that you used to learn from your auntie, and we used to have the inner knowledge that we were not so separated from each other and nature. And I feel like I'm bringing the basics back to people," said White. "Like, 'okay, this is how we come back into our bodies. This is how we feel our legs again. You're more than just a floating head of thought.'"

Mother Bear was born out of the need for a deeper connection between humans and nature. White was no stranger to bodywork therapies and the effects it can have when paired with the greater understanding of the interconnectedness of the world we live in. After years in the bodywork field, working for other companies, she began to feel like she could offer more of herself and her work if she was able to procure a healing space of her own. The seeds were planted, but the journey to bear the fruit of her labors was long.

"I always say, 'have a vision, but take baby steps and do whatever you can do,'" said White, who knew that starting her own practice was the next step. "Following my own advice, I rescued some chickens from one of my old self-acceptance process students. She'd gone through [bodywork] training with me, and she'd also been retired from Head Start. [Head Start delivers early learning, health, and family well-being services to children ages three through four.] I got the inner voice that said, 'reach out to her'. So, I reached out to her, and we started doing self-love, mindfulness, nature, and awareness practices with Head Start kids. And it was a huge success. They all loved it. We got more and more requests. And then Covid hit."

White saw the impact the sessions were having on the kids firsthand. Without a space to continue her practice during Covid shutdowns, she knew she needed to find a property to establish her healing work again when the world opened back up. When Covid came, White noticed people's pain surfaced in a poignant and potent way.

"During that time, we had to face our families, and we had to get still. And so we went, 'Oh, you mean all this pain that I experienced as a kid, or all that anger I have, it's still there?' Everything's coming to the surface right now. It's like everything's getting worse. It's a breakdown for a breakthrough. This is the vision I'm holding for people and humanity." Watching the world unravel in real time during the pandemic opened her eyes to how much the world needed a space to truly connect, not just to ourselves again, but to Mother Nature's lifeforce.

"Like with any dream, it takes 1000 steps," said White. "But if we stay open and we banish all doubt in favor of faith, things will work out. And sometimes you have to do that 500 times, right? Not just once. The question became, how do I create this place where people could remember who they are and connect back to nature? And I felt stuck."

When she found herself in times of trouble, Mother Bear came to her. She sold her house, gave away all her belongings, and started to live with friends until the next step became clear. In the meantime, she connected with her partner about the idea, and they were able to bring their resources together to buy the land where Mother Bear now rests. "It all came together," said White. "Kismet again."

Dave Tuscany and Barbara White, owners of Mother Bear Sanctuary.

Tuscany, co-founder of Mother Bear Sanctuary, is also a certified co-Leader of the ManKind Project, an organization dedicated to helping men cultivate emotional intelligence, integrity, and accountability. As a certified Life Coach, Tuscany specializes in Shadow Awareness and Sexual Shadow Healing for men, guiding them through deep inner work with compassion and clarity. His commitment to personal and collective healing is evident from the workshops he facilitates. Driven by a desire to create a safer, more conscious world for future generations, Tuscany brings wisdom, strength, and heartfelt presence to the sanctuary's mission of transformation.

When someone comes to the retreat space, they can expect a one-on-one session with White, who has more than 40,000 hours in healing body work, or other expert facilitators who work on the land. White says that often her first step with a new visitor is identifying the belief separating the person from their innate worth, which is usually tied to some type of taught belief or pain. From there, she identifies how to bring them back to the body. The process is different for everyone, and sometimes that process involves animal therapy from some of the many animals that inhabit the sanctuary. Sometimes it involves meditation and play practice to get the person moving and back in their body again.

**WHITE NOTICED THAT SOMETIMES THE BODY IS SO LOCKED DOWN WHEN PEOPLE COME TO VISIT MOTHER BEAR, THAT STARTING SESSIONS WITH A SIMPLE MOVEMENT SUCH AS GOAT YOGA OR LEADING A HORSE AROUND THE LAND CAN GET PEOPLE TO SUBTLY BEGIN TO CONNECT WITH THEMSELVES AGAIN.**

"That saying [from Carl Jung], 'What we accept transforms, and felt feelings flow,' is one that comes to mind often, but how do we let the vagus nerve in the body to support that? It's kind of like setting the outline for the rest of the time we share together. I am a transpersonal therapist or eco psychologist, so I use mindfulness, body-based work with the people who come to Mother Bear. And then from there, we might go and do a process with the animals where folks begin to learn ways back to the body."

White notes that one of the most vulnerable things someone can do is play. White noticed that sometimes the body is so locked down when people come to visit Mother Bear, that starting sessions with a simple movement such as goat yoga or leading a horse around the land can get people to subtly begin to connect with themselves again. And through that connection, healing begins to take place. "I love that moment when that light turns on for someone, and they realize that they're enough," said White.

For those struggling with grief, burnout, or disconnection, the space provides a safe, nurturing environment to pause, breathe, and realign. Guests often find clarity and peace by engaging with animals, walking the land, or participating in sessions that honor both vulnerability and resilience. Programs are especially helpful for caregivers, therapists, and activists—those who are always giving and rarely receiving—but are open to everyone who needs some deeper inner reconnection work.

In addition to paid work, Mother Bear offers several free retreats to human trafficking survivors and veterans with PTSD. (Contact White or Tuscany for more specifics, because those retreats are not always listed online.)

# Mother Bear SANCTUARY continued...

However, Mother Bear's healing impact isn't limited to humans. By rescuing and caring for animals, the animals, in turn, play a vital role in healing others. It's a powerful cycle of mutual restoration that White notes is by design.

"I wanted to always have a balance between human and animal care," said White, when asked what sets Mother Bear apart from other centers who share similar offerings. "For that reason, we don't have 300 animals like some of the other sanctuaries. We just have around 25 or 30 animals."

The goats, horses, cows, chickens, and ducks that dot the idyllic sanctuary found their way to White. She said, "You know, kind of like the people I work with, the animals just show up. People call or we just trust who comes to us. And so far, that's how all the animals have been gathered over the last few years." The presence of animals on the land underscores Mother Bear's core belief: all beings, human and non-human alike, are worthy of care and connection. At the end of the day, we are all one.

**FOR THOSE STRUGGLING WITH GRIEF, BURNOUT, OR DISCONNECTION, THE SPACE PROVIDES A SAFE, NURTURING ENVIRONMENT TO PAUSE, BREATHE, AND REALIGN.**

While many retreat centers focus primarily on quiet rest or spiritual study, Mother Bear takes a deeply integrative approach. Visitors aren't just passive participants—they're invited to engage with the land and themselves through movement, sensation, and presence. Workshops might begin with something simple—like barefoot walking on the grass, breathwork in the woods, or slowly feeding the goats—but each activity is intentionally designed to help visitors reconnect with their own inner rhythm and truth. "A lot of the time, people come here because they've lost touch with their body, or they've internalized some shame or belief that they aren't good enough," White said. "But through practice and presence, they start to remember who they are."

The land itself is a co-facilitator in the healing process. Nestled near the Waterloo-Pinckney Recreation Area in southern Michigan, the property offers fields, woods, and water that reflect the stillness and wisdom of nature. For those who feel called to serve animals, the Earth, and community healing, volunteers play an essential role in the retreat's daily operations, helping to sustain a space where transformation and care are possible. Whether you can donate your time or your resources, Mother Bear is always looking for caring hearts to help share expertise or aid in project needs around the land.

Beyond the personal healing that takes place, Mother Bear Sanctuary is also a growing community of like-minded individuals: earth stewards, wellness practitioners, and volunteers who believe in reciprocal care. White dreams of expanding this community through more partnerships, pop-up events, and collaborations with schools, therapists, and nonprofit organizations across Michigan. Looking toward the future, White said that the growth process of Mother Bear has "seemed to happen already." She said she's gotten a lot of requests from traditional therapists in Ann Arbor and has implemented programs with them and feels doing more programs like that would help Mother Bear grow organically.

"I would love to do more talks about why nature and self-acceptance is needed in the world, and how to come back to the body and nature," said White.

For those seeking a meaningful retreat or simply a reconnection with the world around them, Mother Bear Sanctuary provides a path back home—to the self, to the earth, and to one another. "Don't give up," said White. "Life is for you. I hope that's what people take away from Mother Bear."

*Visit Mother Bear Sanctuary and Retreat Center at 20470 Barton Road in Pinckney. Keep up with them online at motherbearsanctuary.com or give them a call at (734)796-6690 for Barbra White or (586) 907-6125 for Dave Tuscany, who can share more details about retreats and offerings not listed online. You can also follow them on Facebook @motherbearsanctuary.*

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# ANTHROPOCENTRIC SOUND
## and the Search for Serenity

By Frank Vandervort

**"Our cities are veritable beehives dominated by the sounds of traffic and industry."**
~Sigurd Olsen

They are shooting over at the Washtenaw Sportsman's Club this morning. It's a half mile away, but it sounds like I'm in the middle of a firefight. Though a mile off, the din of Interstate 94 is ever present like the constant flow of a rushing river with none of the charm. At first periodically, then steadily, cars pass the house. I can hear them coming from well down the two-lane road on which the speed limit is 45 mph but on which many drive much faster. A car passes, then there is a momentary lull, then another goes by. Think of the inexorable splashing of waves against the shore of one of the Great Lakes and you'll get the rhythm.

It's Sunday morning and I sit on the porch overlooking the side yard. Before the day really begins, this spot provides a bit of serenity. This morning, I've been sitting here since the light was still faint, reading, reflecting, watching as a flock of turkeys—three hens and their poults, maybe a dozen in all—amble through the yard, and listening to a few birds sing. As the neighborhood awakens, though, I find myself sitting amid what American author, Barry Lopez has called "the holler of contemporary life."

This morning, I've been sitting here since the light was still faint, reading, reflecting, watching as a flock of turkeys—three hens and their poults, maybe a dozen in all—amble through the yard, and listening to a few birds sing. As the neighborhood awakens, though, I find myself sitting amid what American author, Barry Lopez has called "the holler of contemporary life."

A loud pickup has barely passed when a jet taking off from Metro Airport courses overhead. It makes a noise that is difficult to describe: a sort of pulsating, static-y, echo-y screech. But the planes that are loudest, that sound like they might land on the roof, are the corporate jets and cargo planes coming from or going to Willow Run. On warmer days, a phalanx of motorcyclists will pass by, getting in their last rides before the weather turns cold, their radios blasting above the bikes' growling exhaust.

At 8:30, a chainsaw revs up. Around 10:00, the *piece de resistance* of neighborhood noise: the couple to our east has fired up their lawnmowers. He has one and she has one, matching industrial sized, zero turn riders like landscaping crews use—they are what one on-line guide calls "the Ferrari's [sic] of the lawn mowing world." Back and forth and round and round they go, kicking up a dust tail. They start on the opposite side of their property, and as they draw nearer to us, the noise intensifies. The grass hasn't really grown since its last trim (was it three days ago or four?). They give several acres of the earth a buzz cut that would make a Marine Corps drill instructor envious.

The racket first detracts from and then destroys entirely the morning's peacefulness. As the layers of noise increase, I begin to *feel* it as tension in my body. I grow irritable, resentful, until finally, exasperated with the racket, and hoping to preserve my sanity, I retreat inside.

Since about the time Olson made the observation that serves at the epigram for this essay, medical researchers have been studying the impact of modern humanity's noisemaking on our health. They have discovered that it negatively impacts us in a laundry list of ways. Among these deleterious impacts, some seem obvious, such as hearing loss, tinnitus, and sleep disturbances, but others are less apparent: cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, attention deficits, learning delays in children, and low birth weights in newborns have all been linked to excessive noise pollution.

The non-human world, too, is impacted by what scientists call "anthropocentric noise." Wildlife researchers have found myriad impacts on a wide variety of species. These include changing habitats, deterrence of breeding locations, changes in feeding patterns and locales, and changes to the balance between predators and prey (because one may not be able to hear the other). As with humans, long-term exposure to noise changes animals' stress hormone responses.

It has not always been this way. Referring to the pre-industrial age, the writer Ted Kerasote reminds us that "stillness was once the entirety of the world, a baseline quiet of wind and waves, of birds, whale, and human song." Yet places where humanity's racket is at bay grow harder to find as human beings have swamped the planet. In November 2022, the world's human population reached 8 billion. Jenny Morber, a science journalist, explained, "As the global population soars, cities and towns sprawl out . . . [and] quiet is becoming increasingly scarce."

I have noticed this to be particularly true in and around Ann Arbor, which these days seems to be a nearly non-stop construction zone. The reverberation of pile drivers, the whir of construction machinery, the muscular roar of big trucks crawling around the downtown and campus area were constant. Some of the construction noise was audible three blocks from the site; the noise from one often overlapped with noise from another. All this noise was layered on top of the ever-present sound of buildings' HVAC systems, run of the mill traffic noise—cars, trucks, buses, delivery vans, garbage trucks, and sirens— and planes both small and large flying overhead.

But even in places like the Arboretum, Gallop, and Parker Mills parks, the noise of humanity is endemic. There seems to be no place in or around the city where one can find peace, quiet, or tranquility.

In recent years, I have grown more aware of and more sensitive to the noise of human "progress." I trace that heightened awareness to a single experience.

Several years ago, I decided to backpack the Vermont Long Trail. The nation's oldest long-distance trail, the LT, as it is known by locals, runs along the spine of the Green Mountains the full 273-mile length of the state from the Massachusetts' line to the Canadian border. Time constraints dictated that we had to hike it in sections. On our first trip, we spent a week hiking though the Green Mountain National Forest and the Glastonbury Wilderness.

When we left the trail after seven days and six nights, we pulled into a little roadside diner to get a late lunch and plot our route back to Michigan. After a week during which we only occasionally heard anthropomorphic noise, I was overwhelmed by the sounds of the place: a dozen conversations taking place all at once along with the clatter of dishes and flatware. Over the counter, a television blared cable news. Above all the commotion, a cook called orders back and forth to a waitress.

While hiking, our days began early. We were up at first light and on the trail a short time later. They ended in late afternoon, three or four hours after lunch and an hour or two before dinner. Frank, my friend and hiking companion, sat through these hours saying almost nothing, simply looking off into the forest and studying the landscape.

I tried to do the same. During down times in the first days on the trail, my head flooded with thoughts of work and home responsibilities. My mind, like my body, was used to living at the frenetic pace of a contemporary, success-obsessed, work-focused urban life. I was unused to being still, to being quiet, to simply being. Frank, who lived for decades aside a small lake in a thinly populated area up north, was much more conversant with the practice of solitude than I. As he sat in quiet contemplation, I would grow restless and had to take a walk down along the bank of a creek or through the woods where I might sit for a time on a small boulder or the rotting trunk of a fallen tree.

Olson wrote, "Our lives seem governed by speed, tension, and hurry. We move so fast and are caught so completely in a web of confusion there is seldom time to think." He wrote those words nearly fifty years ago. Our world has only sped up and grown noisier since.

**It has not always been this way. Referring to the pre-industrial age, the writer Ted Kerasote reminds us that "stillness was once the entirety of the world, a baseline quiet of wind and waves, of birds, whale, and human song."**

I struggled to sit with quiet, to be still, to let go of the mental noise of my contemporary life. But by mid-week, I had at least begun to be able to still myself—physically and psychically—amid what Kerasote calls the "natural symphony." During those afternoon hours in the mountains, the symphony consisted of small woodland critters scurrying about, the wind in the hardwood canopy, flowing water, and rain falling onto the forest floor.

In the years since we entered that diner after a week on the trail, I have actively tried to build time for tranquility into my daily routine. These are times that I have come to cherish. But it gets more and more difficult to find quiet places. It seems that I have to go further and further from the environment in which I live my day-to-day life to find anything resembling the sort of quiet we found along the LT.

Resettling in the relative quiet of the house (many of the sounds are still audible, though muffled), my mind drifts back to Vermont. I returned last June to attend a week-long conference, and I found myself with an unscheduled morning. I decided I'd visit one of the quietest places I know. To reach it, you must drive several miles down an unpaved, rut-pocked U.S. Forest Service Road to a trailhead, then hike up two-and-a-half steep miles to a mountaintop where a rustic hikers' lodge sits on the shore of a small pond.

I arrived at the trailhead just as dawn was breaking. The mountain was cloaked by a thick cloud. The forest grew foggier with each step, the mist gathering into droplets on my glasses and arms as I ascended into the clouds. Moisture hung in the air, muffling every sound. Amid that deep quiet, I stopped to listen. After the sound of my own breathing abated, there was near silence, dripping leaves and a few songbirds the only audible things. Further up the trail, I came upon a rill running fat with rainwater. As it made its way down the mountainside, it flowed around and between moss encrusted stones then crossed the trail. I traversed it with a little hop and took a seat on a large rock, listening as the water flowed past. I could hear no human clatter of any sort.

**But even in places like the Arboretum, Gallop, and Parker Mills parks, the noise of humanity is endemic. There seems to be no place in or around the city where one can find peace, quiet, or tranquility.**

When I reached the lodge, a hiker who had spent the night was just getting underway. Soon, he was gone. I had the place to myself. I settled onto the porch, my back against the lodge's log wall. Through the fog, I could see only the immediate area around the structure and the ill-defined contours of the pond. The only consistent sound was the faint lapping of the pond's water.

I sat amid the peacefulness of the place. As usual, it took some time for my mind to settle, to let loose the mundane thoughts that crowd in every day—so many, so often that I lose awareness of their presence, don't realize that my head is full of junk. I sat for nearly two hours, saying nothing, being as still as I could, my mind as focused on the quiet of my surroundings as I could discipline it to be. Too soon, I had to leave.

In my living room, as the traffic rushes past and the neighbors assault their lawns, I long for the peacefulness of that morning at the lodge, and I wonder once again whether it may be time to seek out a quieter place to live. But leaving the home and community where I have lived for decades is difficult. And where would I go? Instead, as our region grows, we should be thinking about reducing the impact of noise on our quality of life, and we should ensure there are places where residents can find tranquility.

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# Leaders and Followers

By Sandor Slomovits

Variants of the phrase, "Preparing the Leaders of Tomorrow" occur regularly in ads and promotional materials for schools, businesses, the military, and other organizations. Whenever I come across it, I can't help thinking, "What about the followers?"

**Whenever I come across it, I can't help thinking, "What about the followers?" … do we not equally need skilled followers, ones who support and help leaders bring their vision to life?**

Of course we need leaders, visionaries, people who see never-before-seen possibilities, who dare to take on apparently impossible tasks. But do we not equally need skilled followers, ones who support and help leaders bring their vision to life? Do we not need people who are willing to work, to struggle with others toward a worthy goal? Do we not need followers capable of choosing trustworthy leaders? Do we not need followers who can speak truth to power and, crucially, ones with the discernment and courage to *not* always follow? Who—in the extreme—recognize when they must disobey a leader's immoral, unlawful orders, when they must instead follow a higher order?

Our history books include many names of leaders who inspired nations to momentous victories and historic achievements. But those books are also replete with cautionary, tragic tales of leaders who coerced, bullied, and strongarmed their way to power, led their countries to catastrophic disasters, in part because their nameless followers followed them blindly and unwisely.

There are familiar names on both sides of that coin; a partial list of ones from just the last century includes FDR, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and Nelson Mandela, but also Stalin, Mussolini, Mao, and Hitler.

My family's history—my mother was a survivor of the infamous Ravensbrück concentration camp for women in Germany, and my father spent two years in the "Munkaszolgálat," literally "work service," though in fact a forced labor unit attached to the Hungarian Army—has long predisposed me to wonder about the role of leaders and followers. How did Hitler manage to convince so many to accept—and then continue to condone—his deranged, hateful, and hate-filled leadership?

Because the Holocaust looms largest in my world view, I focus on Hitler, but the rest, and too many others throughout time and the world, have duly earned recognition on the hellish pedestal of tyranny. How did they all manage to divide their people, teach them to fear and hate each other, and terrorize them into doing their misguided, and ultimately homicidal and suicidal bidding? On the other hand, how did Roosevelt, Gandhi, MLK, and Mandela unite their followers—and even many of their opponents—and offer hope in the darkest times and help redress historic injustices?

**Our history books include many names of leaders who inspired nations to momentous victories and historic achievements.**

Historians will argue for generations about the answers to those questions; I doubt they will ever come to a decisive conclusion.

But I find myself remembering and wondering the most about followers—ordinary people with very limited influence and power—who chose *not* to follow and, with their choices, changed the life trajectories of others… sometimes even saving their lives.

Both my parents' families suffered enormous losses in the Holocaust. From a total of twenty-nine of my father and mother's closest relatives, twenty-one adults and eight children ranging in age from five to fifteen, only eleven adults and three children—less than half of them—survived. Of those fourteen survivors, five of the eleven adults and one of the three children—almost half of them—owed their lives to help they received from non-Jewish Hungarians, Austrians, even German Nazis.

All of them had tales of the trauma and cruelties inflicted on them in those years, but they also talked with gratitude for people they encountered who did not buy into the zeitgeist of the times, who did not believe the vicious antisemitic lies and slurs, and instead went to considerable lengths and took significant risks to aid and shelter them.

My father recalled one commander of his forced labor unit who took sadistic pleasure in pairing short men with tall ones and amused himself watching as their height differential compounded their struggles as they unloaded heavy munitions. But my father also remembered another Austrian commander who always addressed the men with, "Meine Herren," a respectful term meaning, "Gentlemen," and even allowed them to recite their morning prayers. My father always referred to him as, "A real mensch," and credited his humane treatment of the unit with saving lives.

My mother recollected how a guard, after shearing off most of her hair soon after she arrived in Ravensbrück, laughingly tormented her: "How do you like the stylish cut I gave you?" But my mother also spoke with affection of the elderly couple, who had worked for their family before the war, who secretly sheltered one of her sisters in their home on the outskirts of Budapest for several months in 1944 and 1945, thus helping that sister avoid deportation to Ravensbrück.

**But I find myself remembering and wondering the most about followers—ordinary people with very limited influence and power—who chose not to follow…**

There were the two brothers, both policemen in Budapest, who fell in love with two of my father's sisters early in the war, and who not only managed to prevent their deportations, but even helped hide another of my father's sisters and her five-year-old daughter for the last months of the war.

There was the guard in Ravensbrück who so appreciated the haircuts and nail stylings one of my father's sisters gave her, that she assigned my aunt to kitchen duty—*the* plum job in the concentration camp because it meant access to extra food. Sure, that was a transactional kindness, but that guard still deserves some credit for her humanity.

**I choose instead to remember and honor the followers, like the ones who helped save a sizeable fraction of my family, who chose—and will always choose—not to follow.**

There is another slogan, often paired with "Preparing the Leaders of Tomorrow." It is, "If you're not the lead dog, the view never changes." The line is not an inspirational quote by a politician, general, or business tycoon. It is from a 1946 Hollywood farce called, "Road to Utopia," one of four "Road to…" musical comedies starring Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, and Dorothy Lamour. I've never seen the film, but given that it's a farce, I'm going to guess there is a scene from the viewpoint of the dogs of the sled dog team whose only vista is the waggling butt of the leader dog ahead of them.

Both slogans, "Preparing the Leaders of Tomorrow" and, "If you're not the lead dog, the view never changes," elevate the role of leaders, and minimize the one of followers. And there are, have been, and—tragically—likely always will be some malevolent leaders and some lemming-like followers.

I choose instead to remember and honor the followers, like the ones who helped save a sizeable fraction of my family, who chose—and will always choose—*not* to blindly follow.

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# A Spiritual Journey Begins With A Dream

By Cheryl L. Kemp

Teenage years are often filled with angst and mine were no exception. I didn't have a clear path to who I wanted to be or what I wanted to do. I never quite fit in with the subdivision girls but rather worked on the 25-acre family farm after school and on weekends.

I worked beside my father gathering the wisdom and life lessons he thought I should know. I loved my mother too. She was a good mother. The house was clean, lunches were packed, dinner was always promptly on the table, but she was a functioning alcoholic. My father was my port in the storm. My older brother was off living his life, and my younger sister was enjoying the freedom of childhood. Throughout personal family chaos, I sailed through school and grew old enough to have a boyfriend. I dated him for over three years and in retrospect, he was very much a narcissist. My self-esteem took daily hits, and then I realized he'd been cheating on me. All the home and teenage drama chipped away at my soul more than I realized.

I worked beside my father gathering the wisdom and life lessons he thought I should know...My father was my port in the storm.

Those "angsty" teenage things suddenly meant nothing though when my father abruptly died from a heart attack at the age of 57. I was 19. The incredible pain, fear, emptiness, and anger of those days can't be adequately described. I felt like I carried huge, black, heavy boulders inside my body. It was hard to lift my feet. Smiling and laughing had become foreign to me. I carried the weight of the world on my shoulders.

This was the time in my life when I suffered from collective "soul loss," an inner fragmentation caused by a traumatic experience. Most often from the loss of a loved one.

I went back to my abusive boyfriend, trying to grasp on to something familiar. My mother drank even more. I felt the need to comfort my grieving siblings, but I had to scratch up the ravaged emotions buried deep inside me in order to give. I had nothing. I just desperately wanted it all to end! *Car, veer, tree, peace...*

As I laid in my bed, drifting in and out of sleep one night I experienced the orbs. Small, iridescent balls of light coming at me. Passing through me. I remember squeezing my eyes shut and calling out in confusion and fear. What I don't remember is whether I was dreaming or not. Then it was over—as fast as it had come. I opened my eyes and sat up. My heart was pounding, and my body trembled. When the adrenaline receded, I was so tired, both physically and mentally. I melted back into my pillow, my head feeling like it weighed a hundred pounds, and I slept.

I remember squeezing my eyes shut and calling out in confusion and fear. What I don't remember is whether I was dreaming or not.

The air was balmy and smelled like flowers. The vivid blue sky was dotted with white fluffy clouds, and I stood looking at a hill. The green grass rippled in the breeze, and I stared at the beautiful, solitary maple tree standing on its summit like a sentinel in the sunshine. There was barking and I cocked my head to make sure I heard right. There it was again. Our late family dog, Freddie, a lumbering white Pyrenees, came bounding over the hill, running in my direction. A smile split my face because I knew wherever Freddie was, my dad was close behind. And Dad came...over the crest of the verdant hill with his sure, authoritative gait. My joy built until I was ready to explode. He grinned. I ran to him and threw my arms around his waist. I felt his familiar hug deep into my bones. He stepped back. I could see he knew my despair and understood, but his scolding look made me feel ashamed.

"You know what I've taught you," he said in his calm, reasonable father's voice.

"I... I can't," I sobbed into his flannel shirt front.

"You can. You can, and you will. I know you will."

"I miss you so badly. I don't want to navigate this world without you."

"I know, honey, but you were put on Earth to help the family. And to help others."

"I'm tired, Dad. I'm so sad and tired. I feel empty. Can't I just be with you?"

He shook his head. "No ma'am. You've got a job to do. Do it faithfully and do it well, and we'll be together soon. You do know I'm with you, always, right?"

I stared into those kind, familiar brown eyes. Eyes that always watched over us with a good father's vigilance. Eyes that held amazing knowledge and unbending virtue. Eyes that were taken from our earthly home way too soon.

"I have to go," he said gently but in a manner that told me it was non-negotiable.

Warm tears moved down my cheeks in rivulets. "Please don't go. Please."

"I have to, honey. I'll see you again. You know that." His tone—that voice I had tucked so deeply in my heart and knew so well—balked no disagreement. It conveyed: "Don't whine about this, daughter. It is what it is."

"I understand," I relented. "But saying I'll miss you just isn't adequate."

He smiled at this revelation. "Isn't that the truth? Remember the adage I taught you?"

"Character is who you are when no one is looking?" I asked.

"No. The other one. Now would be the time to use it."

He laid his hand on my head—the hand that used to be work-callused and bent with the onset of arthritis was now perfect. He nodded, smiled, and started back up the hill.

"Dad!" I yelled, the frantic tone signifying I didn't want him to leave me. Not again.

He stopped, turned, and looked at me with such compassion and love I ached to run to him, but instead simply said, "I love you."

He gave that twitch of a grin. "I love you too, honey. More than you'll ever know. Don't forget our adage."

I am now spiritually aware of every blessing sent my way, and I walk happily and calmy through this life God has gifted me.

He walked over the hill with Freddie prancing happily at his feet. Calm and joy infused my body, and I knew what he said was true. Everything would be alright.

I opened my eyes, and I was laying in my bed with the pastel colors of the morning filtering through my window. Dad's favorite adage was ringing in my mind. "If you can't change something, you better change the way you look at it."

It was my father's passing and his blessed gift of our dream that was the catalyst of my spiritual journey. I began acknowledging that death was a part of life and nothing was going to stop it. I tried a few paths: psychic, mediumship, different churches, and they may have been comforting at the time, but there was no certainty to them. I wasn't healing that void in my heart and soul.

It wasn't until I stepped back into and embraced my Catholic roots that my true healing began. I completed the Bible-In-A-Year series, and God's words and stories contributed greatly to my spiritual healing. I am now spiritually aware of every blessing sent my way, and I walk happily and calmy through this life God has gifted me.

*Cheryl L Kemp is a writer living in rural South-Central Lower Michigan — part of the Irish Hills area. She is a wife and mother, an artist, gardener, and herbalist. She is currently the social media director for Feathered Follies and the non-profit Feathered Follies Foundation. You can reach her by email at cherkmp428@gmail.com or on Facebook at facebook.com/CherylLNalepaKemp.*

# The Enchantment of Lympha: Ancient Spirit of Pure Water

By Dianna Rhyan

Inside mossy sunken walls, a bronze nymph pours out splashing streams from cupped palms, arms outstretched to make an offering in a little-known garden I visit.

*Water calmed as the goddess raised her face from the pool.*

*Sprinkling her forehead with crystalline drops,*

*she drew moist tresses over her shoulder,*

*and began her story…*
*(Ovid, Metamorphoses)*

The Roman goddess Lympha, robed in limpid undulations, appears and disappears according to rhythms invisible on water's surface. In cult, she is the personified life of water running free. Elemental Lympha, who could appear as freshwater, a spirit, goddess, or nymph, dwelt only in water that was pure, and finding its own way, emerging from a natural spring called living water. If any of those features were absent, then so was she.

Nymphs dwelt in springs, inseparable from the landscape. When water was caught, a liquid rather than a nymph remained. Yet, basins provided a reflection for worshippers inside temple precincts. Dipped from the wild, vessels of holy water graced the entrance of ancient sanctuaries to cleanse those who entered. Suppliants trailed fingers in the clear water to sprinkle themselves or scattered drops around themselves in a circle.

But here is a delight: gathering water was women's work. The girl with a vessel on her head appears frequently in Classical art excavated from sacred sites. Lympha attended the woman walking to the spring, then home to house or home to sanctuary.

**Elemental Lympha, who could appear as freshwater, a spirit, goddess, or nymph, dwelt only in water that was pure, and finding its own way, emerging from a natural spring called living water. If any of those features were absent, then so was she.**

The daily visit to the native spring was a duty, a pleasure, and a lingering moment for reflection and ritual contact with the ever-flowing feminine divine. Leaning over a living fountain, she could see a rippling unformed face found nowhere else. When a girl's wedding day dawned, bridal bath water was drawn from a living spring the bride felt relationship with, or from nearby shrine-sheltered waters of a nymph.

To invite evanescent Lympha, or any sister water nymph, nymphaea (shrines) for their presence were created at a cave, spring, or grove in natural form. With some careful chiseling, a rock spring became a rustic basin for offerings, with garlands, figurines, and marble plaques arranged above. Women tied homemade cloth ribbons on overhanging branches, and shepherds hung up goat-milk buckets and whittled flutes. The place had healing powers. Nymphaea survived in remote areas until late antiquity thriving in art, myth, cult, and private prayer.

Devotees affirmed their convictions through material offerings and patient work caring for springs, shrines, and gardens. Lifegiving and benevolent as they were, sometimes nymphs abducted those they loved. A man who encountered them face to face might become a nympholept (someone "taken hold of" by nymphs). This sacred possession, or awakening, was a form of *enthousiasmos*, meaning "divinity within," the word behind all our enthusiasms.

The mythical hero Odysseus was a nympholept of sorts: he disappeared for years with the nymph Kalypso in her poplar-shadowed, cedar-scented, spring-watered garden and cave, when he was supposed to be heading home. The ancient novel *Daphis and Chloe* describes a sensual awakening, centered around a pastoral grotto that innocent lovers tend together, inspired, protected by, and devoted to the nymphs of the place.

Being taken by nymphs brought gifts of inspiration, and the nympholept expressed visions through carving, painting, poetry, and prophecy. Archaic devotees lived out a steadfast commitment often as hermits, their lives focused on intimate rituals.

**The daily visit to the native spring was a duty, a pleasure, and a lingering moment for reflection and ritual contact with the ever-flowing feminine divine.**

Ancient evidence survives of a handful of worshippers dedicated to the care of nymph-inhabited caves, sheltering its sacred spring. As nympholept, Archedamos of Thera lived alone to cherish a cave near Vari, on Mount Hymettos in Greece. In this remote place, perhaps around 400 BCE, he left images and messages carved in stone to show that he was "taken" and directed to perform his life's work there.

He became a mystic figure inhabiting the borderland, away from the secular world. Following his own mystical path, he devoted himself to Vari Cave and cultivated fruit trees, herbs, and flowers near the entrance, in his reverence for living water.

When it was rediscovered by modern explorers, the ancient cave of Vari was screened by a fig tree whose branches shielded the entrance. The fig's water-seeking roots were visible far beneath the entrance, twining down beside handmade curving steps, finally emerging out on a stone shelf shaped for votive offerings. In the Mediterranean sun, the fig lives where other trees cannot; it seeks and finds water more deeply, and is a sure sign of fertile, hidden streams below the barren rock.

Once, I stood by the mouth of the cave, on Mount Hymettos sacred to the Muses, contemplating its stark black entrance in brilliant sundrenched hillside, daydreaming, musing, on the rustic secrets of this quiet, layered place: a subterranean sanctuary requiring careful descent; an otherworldly atmosphere suited to water spirits, where dripping swathes of roots, and tremulous steps are only gradually revealed.

Devotion here is visible, tangible, and whole.

What lured the enraptured Archedamos to this wild shrine? Was this the allure of Lympha, the beguilement of nymphs?

The Greek and Latin roots of Lympha's name evoke cleansing baths and ritual transformations: lustrous pourings-out including "nymphic" bridal immersion, washing away pollution, or libating the dead.

*Rinsing tender bodies with delicate hands,*

*it is as if some healing enchantment*

*flows in these gentle waters.*
(Alcaeus)

Amidst such evocative contradiction, we are left wondering; if we seek to define Lympha, we reach for water, and water escapes our grasp.

*Like the lotus blossom in her pool,*

*the flower folds her petals*

*and draws serene into the shimmering depths,*

*far beneath the watery caverns,*

*far beyond the touch of any hand.*

I recall that in folklore, some say only those who have lost their way and wandered long from the path can ever find Lympha. If Lympha was ever mistreated, she would be angered, and water turned foul. Or it disappeared. In my mind's eye, there stoops Tantalus, the archetypal devourer. Once he thirsted to deceive the gods; now trapped in the underworld,

*Raving with thirst, he tried to drink but captured nothing;*

*the soil cracked where he stood, dried by divine revenge.*
(Odyssey)

If anyone harmed a sacred spring, sacred vision on the site could cease:

*…gone is the voice of the prophetic spring.*

*Speaking water has been silenced.*
(Kedrenos)

**As time passed, manipulation of natural flows through tunnels and aqueducts converted water into a public utility, in ever more elaborate buildings over natural springs.**

The ambition to control whole bodies of water is ancient. In history, kingdoms fell when inimical kings bridged, confined, "punished," or diverted rivers for their own purposes. As time passed, manipulation of natural flows through tunnels and aqueducts converted water into a public utility, in ever more elaborate buildings over natural springs.

In the time of Lympha's cherishing, the landscape was considered a sacred primordial being who was alive with the goddesses and gods of nature. All deities influenced nature. Many dwelt not in temples, but in numinous caves and groves, or roamed free in the form of natural forces like winds, storms, or springs. Because Gaia, the creative earth, was a wise organism, any wise human treated the environment with care and approached the earth with respect.

Powerful oaths could sound like this:

*Rivers and earth, stand as witnesses.*

*Keep watch over our oaths of fidelity.*
(Iliad)

Or even simpler to swear, as a proverb,

*By earth, by springs, by rivers, by brooks.*

Such oaths speak to us today if we keep watch over our fidelity—if we are seeking to honor humanity's sacred bond with the earth and her flowing waters. To aid us, myth slips in where logic could never go. After all, in the world's oldest myth of underworld descent, for the Sumerian goddess Inanna to live anew, to return to the upperworld again,

*Creatures sprinkled fresh water on her corpse…and Inanna rose.*

Where are the subterranean springs, the secret sources of rivers Huron, Grand, and Chippewa, the wild waves of Saginaw Bay, and deepest currents of Saint Clair? Immortal freshness, integrity, and beauty are one with these flows. In memory of Lympha, let all those washed by Great Lakes and sister tributaries, marshland, brook, vernal pool, and shore, seek to honor and learn their hidden and forgotten ways, to restore their innate purity and abundant life.

*Before you cross the shining currents of ever-flowing rivers,*

*cleanse your hands in the shimmering surface*

*and pray, contemplating the bright and lovely stream.*

(Hesiod, Works and Days)

In the bodies of all, two rivers wind: dark blood and lustrous lymph. The goddess gave the translucent one its name, long, long ago. Inner lymph washes clean by flowing, and so did she. Indweller and protector of purifying springs, Lympha aided the sick, the lost, or those who were sick with grief, for her fluid had the holy power to heal. For the body or psyche in need of return, for tree sap, for rivers, and for human lymph, the blocked stream finds her way through to new life, and inside our bodies, the liquid waters of lymph stream around our wounds to heal. As Lympha reminds us, all are living watersheds, sacred and mystical, designed in flowing layers.

*Dianna Rhyan, PhD is the author of* Staff of Laurel, Staff of Ash: Sacred Landscapes in Ancient Nature Myth*, and* Mestra the Shapeshifter: Ancient Heroine of the Sacred Grove*, both from Moon Books. This meditation on the goddess Lympha is adapted from Staff of Laurel, Staff of Ash.*

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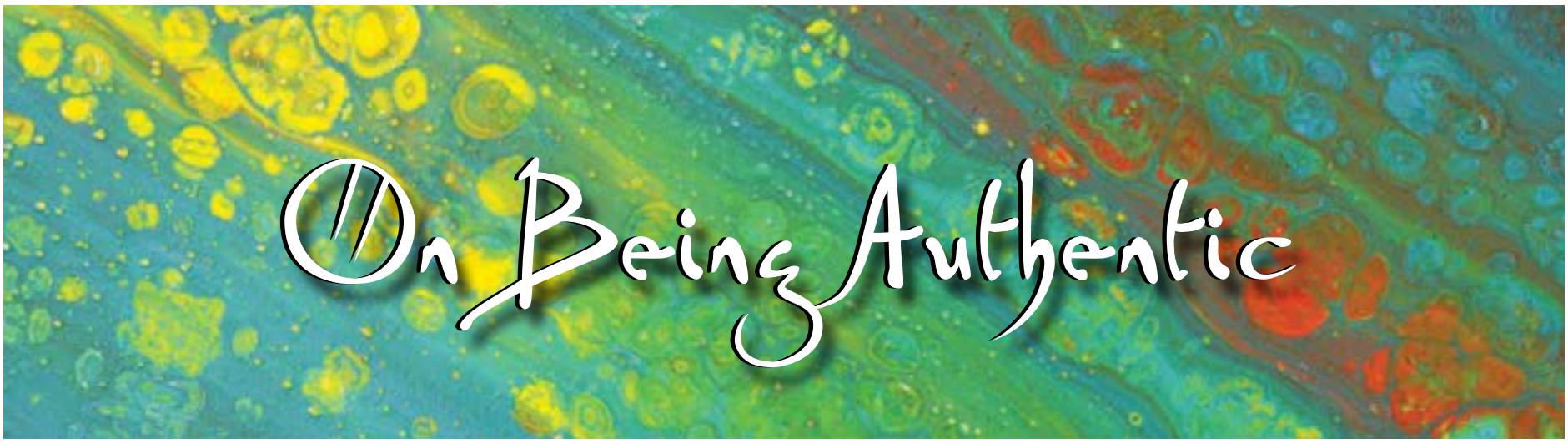

# On Being Authentic

By Julie Barrie

I recently spoke with a cousin of mine who mentioned that it was the anniversary of the death of her mother. I let her know that I, too, felt the heaviness of loss even years later. I told her how I was surprised that the world kept moving even when the pain of loss was so crushing, and it seems like everything should just stop. It doesn't seem right that the world, time, and life doesn't conform to our need to pause.

My sister's death continues to be one of those events my life that frustrates me. I'll never have the answers that I need to "move on" or "accept" the massive cave of despair her absence has created. It has, however, made me realize that despite the pain of not having her in my life, I have a responsibility and a need to be present for the people that I love, and I will continue to strive to be the best possible wife, mother, daughter, sister, friend, and therapist that I can be. My conversation with my cousin reminded me of the important and incredibly impactful moment I had with a client shortly after my sister's death.

...I was surprised that the world kept moving even when the pain of loss was so crushing, and it seems like everything should just stop. It doesn't seem right that the world, time, and life doesn't conform to our need to pause.

My training as a social worker included clinical supervision, much of which was focused on aspects of providing ethical and competent care. Supervisors frequently cautioned us about not revealing too much personal information to clients. They would say things like, "Make sure that whatever you do share is for their (the client's) benefit – not just because you want to talk about yourself." This is a common theme in mental health training, supervision, and practice literature. This concept is clarified by Dr. Barbara LoFrisco, a Tampa, Florida–based licensed mental health counselor, licensed marriage and family therapist (LMFT) and a certified sex therapist (CST). In her blog post from November 2012, she confirmed this approach. She posted, "Self-disclosure in therapy is when a therapist shares their own personal views and experiences with a client with the purpose of improving the client's emotional or mental state. It should be done solely for the purpose of helping the client, and not to meet the needs of the therapist. I never expected to struggle so much with this concept as I did shortly after I started my own therapy practice.

At this time, I only had about four clients. I saw those clients weekly and was continuing to hold clinical hours at a non-profit agency. Thursdays were my busy clinic nights. I can remember packing up my belongings and locking up the office. On these later-in-the-day appointments I always looked forward to seeing my husband, having dinner, and saying good-night to my children. What I never expected was a frantic phone call from my nephew. I couldn't understand much of what he was saying, but I knew he was crying and extremely upset. This wasn't good. What I could make out was that my sister had collapsed, and she was being taken to the hospital. I assured him that his mom would be okay. I'm not really sure why I felt so strongly that I needed to tell him that, but for some reason I intuitively felt the need to reassure him. Perhaps because I needed to think that she was going to be okay myself. All I know is that it came naturally to say it, even though I knew in my heart that it might not be true. I had to be positive. I had to hold hope. I had to be strong.

My sister and I were born 13 months apart. Being the older sister, I always felt that I needed to be there for her. Truth be told, we were always there for each other. She encouraged me despite her own personal struggles. She told me how much she believed in me when I doubted myself. She was a cheerleader in my life and someone that consistently tried to not let me down. Unfortunately, like many of us, she suffered from the burden of depression. I wish that I could have helped her more with that part of her life. Her difficulty helped to inspire and lead me toward the field of mental health. I may not have said it enough to her while I had the chance, but my sister was profoundly impactful in my life. I miss her every day. Her personal struggles had a ripple effect in her immediate family. Her depression symptomology pushed her family members away, and this caused pain beyond measure to her sons and her ex-husband. In addition to her mental health struggles, she frequently dealt with medical issues. The evening she died is still a mystery. Despite an autopsy, the circumstances of her death remain unclear.

After ending that phone call from my nephew, panic set in. My husband and I jumped in the car and drove directly to the hospital where she was taken. It was about a 45-minute drive to the hospital and the drive itself was a blur in my memory. Once arriving, we quickly made our way through the Emergency Department and were taken to her room. My nephews were there, and several other relatives. There was complete quiet except for the crying. She could not be revived. It didn't feel real. My fifty-year-old sister collapsed in her own home for no apparent reason. If my nephew hadn't been home and heard the noise created by her fall, she might not have been found until the next day.

I had a hard time seeing her face. Much of her face was obscured by tubes and hoses the medics had inserted while they tried revived her. I remember touching her foot. One of my nephews was near her face, crying, and I remember putting my hands on his shoulders at one point.

The night my sister died, I made four phone calls to my four private practice clients whom I was scheduled to see the very next day. I was completely unpracticed in this procedure. There was no staff to help me with this task. I don't remember exactly what I told them, and I think that for at least one of them I was only able to leave a voice message. If I can assume what I would have said, most likely it was that I had a family emergency and I would need to cancel their next therapy session, and I would contact them when I knew more about my availability to reschedule. I knew I had left things very open ended. I had no idea what I was doing, when I'd be back in the office, or what the future held for me. All I could think of was my sister and wanting to be there for her children.

One of my clients had just started therapy with me and was struggling with loss and feelings of abandonment and betrayal—not a great mix for an emergency situation like this. I knew that she was not new to being in therapy, but I also knew that she wasn't quite sure about me. We were in that very early part of the therapeutic relationship that was fragile and not established enough to withstand too much stress. Without even knowing her complete history, I knew that cancelling on her was possibly going to cause a rift in our relationship. I couldn't imagine having a therapist who cancels the night before a therapy session and doesn't offer any explanation. I was still establishing trust with this young woman, but cancelling the session was unavoidable.

My training as a social worker included clinical supervision, much of which was focused on aspects of providing ethical and competent care. Supervisors frequently cautioned us about not revealing too much personal information to clients.

Early in my training, I was told that the therapist is supposed to be a "blank screen." I was also taught that when trying to establish trust in the therapeutic relationship I needed to be "real." It was pretty tough to be a blank screen and real at the same time. I was a mess. I felt like there was a hole inside of me that would never be healed. I had no idea when I might feel I could go back to my work. I couldn't imagine being able to focus and to give someone my undivided attention without getting lost in my own sadness. About a week after the funeral, I contacted my private practice clients and picked a date on the calendar to force myself back in the saddle. I decided that after four weeks I could get back to work. I got them all rescheduled for their next therapy session. It was surprising to me that none of them refused to reschedule and all agreed to set up an appointment. On the first day back to my office I was given a great gift, as well as shocking realization.

Heading back to my office felt a little surreal. How could I really expect that I could focus and listen and be at all helpful? I wasn't crying constantly, but tears were never very far from the surface and it didn't take much for me to get lost in my own thoughts. In my heart of hearts, I really wanted to take more time to be home, to tend to my own needs, and hide from responsibilities outside of my nephews and my own kids. I was very glad that my office partner had taken care of collecting the mail and watering the plants that surely would have disintegrated into dust by my absence. I was relieved on the first day back to realize that being there to give my full attention to someone else was actually a relief. It helped me not think about my own loss, even if it was just a few hours each day.

> Early in my training, I was told that the therapist is supposed to be a "blank screen." I was also taught that when trying to establish trust in the therapeutic relationship I needed to be "real." It was pretty tough to be a blank screen and real at the same time.

When I first returned to work, my experience with each client was different.

Most of them saw that I was okay, or at least presenting as such, and none of them asked much about why I had been gone. Then when the young woman who was new to my practice came in– the one who had just begun establishing a connection with me—she started the session by asking me if I was okay. She had a bit of an air about her, as though she was waiting for me to tell her that I had taken off four weeks to go to the beach or something. Her chin was slightly raised, and her eyes projected a wall, a barrier almost, daring me to ask her what was wrong. I remained quiet, and she asked me if I was willing to explain why I had cancelled our session and not rescheduled for all these weeks. I told her that I was really sad and that there had been a death in my family, but that I was ready to focus now and be there for her. That previous air of indignation collapsed in front of me. I could see the wall her eyes had built crumble away. My brief share tore down her defenses and immediately solidified an understanding between the two of us. Tears immediately fell from her eyes, and she softened. After a moment, and quite a lot of tears, she told me about how incredibly angry she felt when I cancelled our last appointment, so much so that she was only coming in to yell at me and tell me what a terrible therapist I was. Moreover, she was planning to fire me. She blew her nose and thanked me for sharing the reason I had cancelled our appointment. She told me what she grieved in her life, and her experiences with abandonment, and the betrayals she suffered when she had trusted people. Our therapeutic alliance started that day. She never knew about the pain that I felt losing my sister. I didn't share my continued burden of loss or my bottomless chasm of grief. However, she started to trust me in part because I told her that I had to cancel our session because I was attending to a death. I'm pretty sure that I wasn't exactly a blank screen, but I was definitely real.

*Julie Barrie has been a therapist in Ann Arbor since 2006 and began her private practice therapy office in 2013. She lives in Ann Arbor with her husband of over 40 years. Luckily, all of their four children live in the area. Their family is growing as their adult children choose partners, and with the arrival of grandchildren.*

*Barrie holds an MSW degree from Wayne State University and a Sexual Health Certificate from U-Michigan. Her office is located at 5340 Plymouth Rd Suite 104 Ann Arbor, MI 48105 . Get in touch by emailing her at juliasdesigns@comcast.net or call (734) 945-8143.*

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# LET'S REIMAGINE LIBERTY PLAZA!

## Downtown parks are for everyone. Creating and maintaining inviting public open spaces at the city center brings people together.

**Liberty Plaza**, located in Ann Arbor's downtown core, was created in 1977 and has changed little since then. With the increase in downtown residents in recent years, Liberty Plaza becomes more important as an open space park.

### Limitations of the original design

Liberty Plaza is about a quarter of an acre, with stairs and ramps that descend from street level to the "garden level"of the adjacent, privately-owned property. A newsstand/bookstore in that space once attracted parkgoers, but it is long gone. The City of Ann Arbor has made occasional minor improvements to spruce up Liberty Plaza, but the park's physical design remains problematic.

### Recreating Liberty Plaza

We can work together to reimagine Liberty Plaza! In the conceptual site plans (right) a potential redesign of Liberty Plaza shows the plaza raised to street level. The open space is a green lawn with a water feature for warm weather, converting to an ice-skating rink during winter. This concept anticipates the adjacent First Martin building reorienting its street-level commercial use toward the recreated plaza.

### Potential sources of funding for Liberty Plaza's reinvention

**DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**
The DDA was created to reinvest tax dollars in the downtown. Attractive urban parks have a positive economic impact on surrounding businesses. The DDA would be an excellent partner in the redesign of Liberty Plaza.

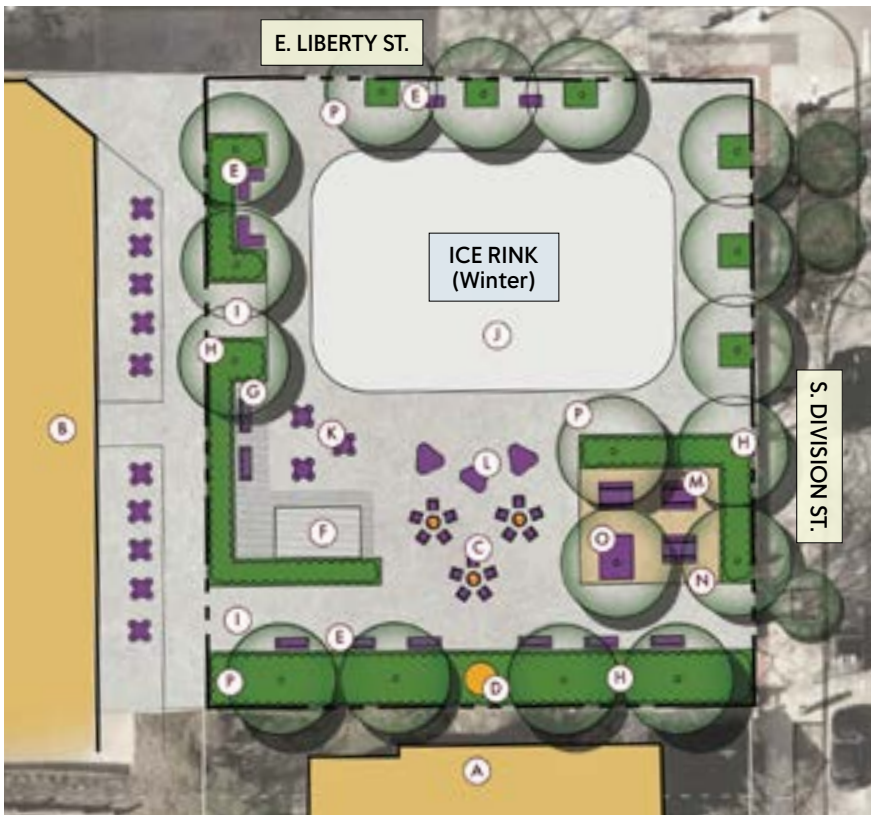
**STATE GRANTS** The City of Ann Arbor is eligible for millions of dollars in state funds earmarked for urban parks, including the MEDC's Michigan Talent Partnership grant program.

**PRIVATE DONATIONS** Public investment could be paired with fundraising from private sources. Contributions could come from individuals, businesses and foundations.

## A PARK FOR ALL SEASONS

### LANDMARKS & POSSIBLE PARK FEATURES

- (A) **Kempf House**
- (B) **First Martin redevelopment**
- (C) Splash pad
- (D) Sculpture
- (E) Benches
- (F) Shade structure with seating
- (G) Shade structure with bench swings
- (H) Planted area
- (I) Connection to First Martin building
- (J) Lawn area / Ice rink
- (K) Tables and chairs
- (L) Concrete benches
- (M) Communal tables
- (N) Aggregate surfacing
- (O) Seating platform/ planter
- (P) Trees




## Let's create an inviting downtown park!

# What's New in the Community

By Lynda Gronlund

*This ongoing column features upcoming events within Ann Arbor/Washtenaw County and surrounding areas' Body/Mind/Spirit communities, new (during the past year or two) practitioners and holistic businesses, new books written by local/regional authors, new classes, as well as new offerings by established practitioners and holistic businesses.*

2025 interns, Naurilan Vassili Ntouala (on left) and David Moore.

2024 interns and staff– Melvin, Patrice, Jessica, Eric, David, Jackson, Heidi and De'Andre.

**Melvin Parson's mission** is to give formerly incarcerated people a better chance at improving their lives: "changing their soil," as he calls it, through a unique nine-month paid internship program. Participants work on the farm as well as participating in training on financial literacy, social/emotional workshops, nutrition classes, non-violent communication training, field trips, equine-assisted therapy, and career development and placement with Michigan Works.

Filmmaker Zach Damon with Michigan Supreme Court Justice Richard Bernstein

# New Offerings by Established Businesses and Practitioners

**Ann Arbor filmmaker Zach Damon debuted his new film *Resilience Revealed: Ann Arbor's Disability Legacy* at the Ann Arbor District Library's downtown branch on July 27th, the 35th anniversary of the signing into law of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990.**

It tells the story of disability and accessibility activism in Ann Arbor long prior to the ADA. From the 1930s through the 1980s, Ann Arbor helped shape the national disability rights movement, impacting contemporaries and future generations. The film explores this history through personal narratives, historical accounts, and expert insights.

Current Ann Arbor Mayor Christopher Taylor appears in the documentary, reflecting on the historical infrastructure of the city, built as an agricultural town in the early 19th century, relying on horses for transportation. The narrow streets and buildings of downtown were not built with disability access in mind. He gives perspective on why people with disabilities are important to our community and why the history of disability advocacy is important. Prior to demands for change, people with disabilities were largely excluded from participating in society and community, due to lack of access and social stigma. The film features Michigan Supreme Court Justice Richard Bernstein, the first blind person to serve on the Court and an accomplished disability advocate, who invited the film crew to the Hall of Justice in Lansing to interview him. Disability Network Executive Director Alex Gossage, Ann Arbor City Council Member Ayesha Ghazi Edwin, Kathy Homan of the Association for Community Advocacy, Dessa Cosma of Detroit Disability Power, and Renee Hall of Self Advocates of Michigan were interviewed as well. The film featured original music from Vicalely, a local performer from the Neutral Zone.

Damon has a unique perspective and passion for the project, as a person who grew up in Ann Arbor with a disability. He knew that the city had a rich history of activism for human rights, civil rights, and women's rights, but he had not heard much about its record on disability rights. So, he decided to learn and document it. He said that the ADA marked the first time that people with disabilities were "given a voice nationally," and that they were recognized as deserving "to be treated with respect and dignity." He is the creator and host of local late-night show *Ann Arbor Tonight*, and the director of an award-winning short film *Nightmare*. About *Resilience Revealed*, he said "I just want people to know that anything is possible… not everything is permanent… there can be ways to have a better world and a better community and better society. Hopefully we can all want to pay it forward."

*Future screenings are to be announced, and questions can be directed to ask@aadl.org, with "Resilience Revealed" in the subject line.*

**Ann Arbor based psychotherapist Hugh Ransley, MA LLP began offering Ketamine Assisted Psychotherapy (KAP) in 2023.**

This modality allows clients to access their innate wisdom through an altered state of consciousness, giving them the opportunity to gain perspective that is not readily accessible in day-to-day life. KAP involves preparation sessions, a ketamine-assisted session using the medication, and follow-up integration sessions. To make this modality more accessible and affordable, Ransley has developed a unique small group program. Over the course of six months, he works with a group of no more than four people. Each person does an initial consultation with Ransley to determine if the program is a good fit for their goals and whether they are a safe person to include in the group. If the client and Ransley decide to go ahead, he connects them with a medical doctor who prescribes the medication, which they bring with them to the 3-hour ketamine-assisted group session.

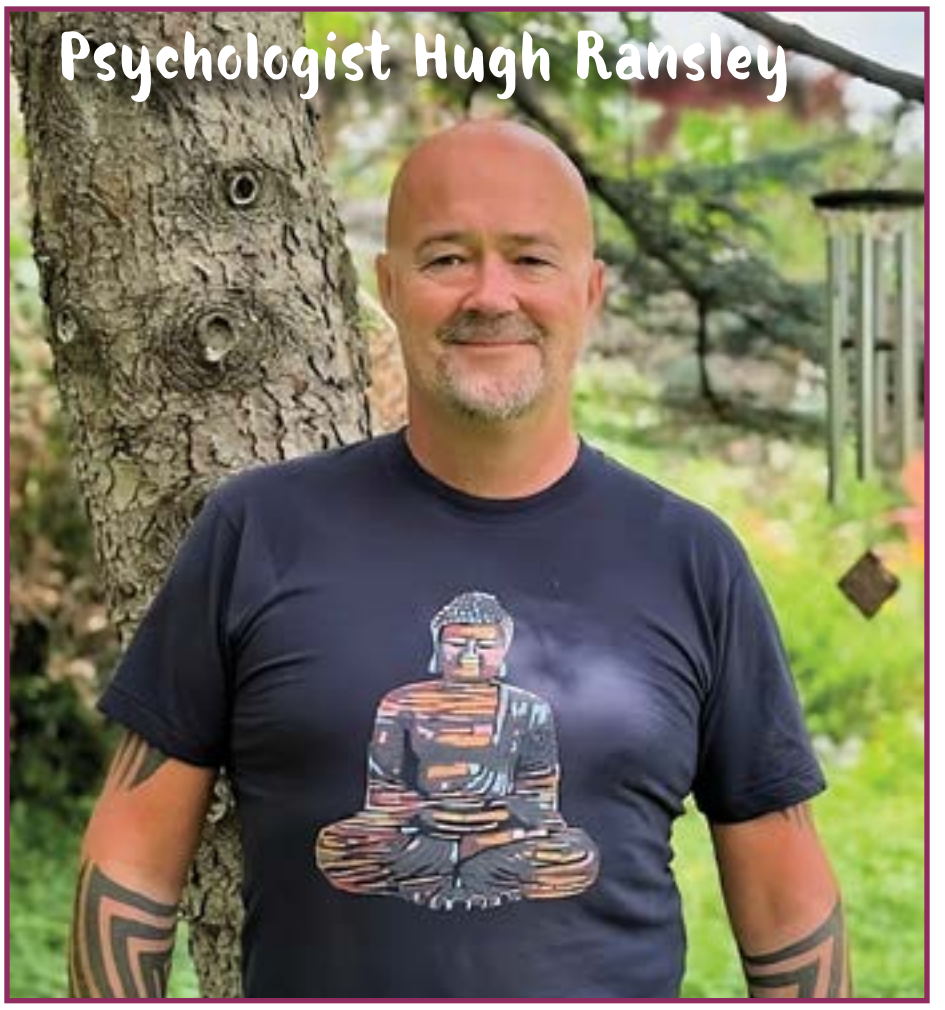
Ransley has created an area in his north Ann Arbor home specifically for this purpose. He explained that the group begins with intention setting and meditation, and that the session is somewhat ceremonial, as would be done with other psychedelic plant medicines in various cultures. It is non-religious,

but spiritual, and designed to create a "safe, loving container on an intellectual and biological level," so that participants can fully relax and allow their nervous system to be in a parasympathetic state. This is different, he explained, than a clinical setting where most KAP is done. These tend to be very sterile, medically focused, and not very welcoming or comfortable. "Ketamine is a very safe medicine," he said, "and it is not necessary to medically monitor" when a trained facilitator is present. His clients use it in a smaller dose than traditional tablets. It is taken sublingually, dissolving over a period of about 18 minutes, making it a gentle experience. Clients lie down on mats with eyeshades while Ransley plays a specially designed soundtrack. Clients are required to have a ride home after the session to ensure safety.

Afterward, clients have an individual integration session with Ransley to process their experience. More sessions can be done if the client desires, but Ransley said that ideally that would be an adjunct to one's own therapy, whether with himself or their own therapist. He said that this modality can be used for self-exploration, and that studies support that it can help with depression and post-traumatic stress. The group container has produced some lasting supportive friendships, he said, which was an unforeseen but welcome result.

Ransley has been a practicing psychotherapist for over 18 years and describes himself as a Person-Centered Therapist. He is also a Zen Buddhist who teaches mindfulness and meditation.

*Ransley's next KAP group will form in October. More information is on integrated-counselinga2.com, and Hugh Ransley can be reached by email at hughransley@gmail.com or by phone at (734) 556-6316*




## Heidi Schmitz, LMSW-C, MSW, RMT started her private therapy practice, En Route Health & Wellness, in January.

A University of Michigan School of Social Work graduate, she started her career at Washtenaw County Community Mental Health in Ann Arbor, then worked for a private practice under another therapist for two years before setting out to work for herself.

Schmitz has a unique background in dance and movement, having graduated from the University of Michigan Flint with a BA in Dance and Theater in 2004. She is a Dancing Mindfulness facilitator certified through the Institute for Creative Mindfulness and is working toward a Therapeutic Dance Certificate through the Embodied Education Institute of Chicago. "Dance is very healing," she said. "Trauma and experiences live in the body, and some people have trouble being able to communicate what they're experiencing," she explained. Dance and movement can help people express and process their feelings and experiences. They do not need to be trained dancers to be able to do this. She noted that so many people feel a sense of disconnection with their bodies and selves, and that she wants to help her clients feel more embodied, connected, and curious about life again.

Schmitz has a variety of other therapeutic tools available to her. She is trained in Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), a method in which specific eye movements are used to help clients change the emotions associated with traumatic or distressing experiences, allowing the brain to heal. She also uses Acceptance Commitment Therapy (ACT), a psychotherapy approach which involves accepting one's thoughts and emotions as appropriate responses and committing to make necessary life changes regardless of those feelings and circumstances. Schmitz also uses Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), mindfulness, Motivational Interviewing, and arts-based interventions.

She is experienced in working with adults facing life changes or transitions, depression and mood disorders, anxiety, trauma, substance abuse, grief and loss, chronic health issues, environmental/climate distress, and challenges related to aging, including dementia. She works with clients both in person and online. Her office on Liberty Street in Ann Arbor is large enough to do movement work but also cozy with a comfortable couch. She wants clients to feel at home and welcome to sit, lie down, or move in whatever way they need or want to during sessions. The office is on the second floor but has an elevator for accessibility.

Schmitz does accept both insurance and self-pay clients, with sliding scale options for those experiencing financial hardship.

*En Route Health & Wellness is located at 103 East Liberty, Suite 206, Ann Arbor, MI 48104. More information is online at enroutehealthwellness.com, and Heidi Schmitz can be reached by phone or text at (734)224-9936 or by email at heidi@enroutehealthwellness.com.*

## Melvin Parson started We the People Opportunity Farm as a 501c3 nonprofit organization in 2018.

His mission is to give formerly incarcerated people a better chance at improving their lives: "changing their soil," as he calls it, through a unique nine-month paid internship program. Participants work on the farm as well as participating in training on financial literacy, social/emotional workshops, nutrition classes, non-violent communication training, field trips, equine-assisted therapy, and career development and placement with Michigan Works. The goal while they are in the program is to "come alongside them in a way that builds trust so that they allow us to help them change some soil in their lives."

# What's New in the Community continued...

Parson was formerly incarcerated himself; he stated that he was "in and out of prisons and jails for thirteen years." In 2015, he said, he "inherited a raised vegetable bed [he] didn't ask for," while living at Avalon Housing, which helps people get out of homelessness. He "put some food in the ground, and it started growing." Around the same time, he saw a documentary about growing food, and his passion was sparked. He started with no knowledge of food or farming, feeling "very disconnected from food, like a lot of people," but he began learning voraciously. He went to the farmer's market in Kerrytown and "learned what kale was," he said. He noticed that almost none of the farmers or buyers were black like himself and felt like God was telling him that this was where he was needed. He recalled a saying from his childhood: "if you don't have a seat at the table, you're on the menu." He became determined to claim a seat at the table for himself and others like him.

Parson rented land from an Ypsilanti church, where he built the farm he envisioned. Parson along with his interns grow organic produce: mainly collard greens, kale, jalapeno peppers, and heirloom tomatoes, with smaller amounts of garlic, beets, and potatoes. Some of the food is sold in local grocery stores, food co-ops, and to restaurants to help support the farm. The rest goes to the farm's no-cost food distribution program, allowing local families facing food insecurity access to fresh, healthy food.

Farm manager Eric and Sam, an intern from 2022.

In 2026, the Farm aims to open their newest venture: the Good Soil Café. The coffee shop will be housed in the iconic "Cow Building" on Ecorse in Ypsilanti, which was acquired by prominent Ypsilanti landlord Stewart Beal of Beal Properties this year. The building, instantly recognizable by the giant cow on its roof, has housed a number of businesses since it was built in the sixties. It was vacant when Beal purchased it in order to partner with Parson on the Good Soil Café project. The café will employ formerly incarcerated people and will serve as "a community-driven space" that will host different community events. Parson calls it a "social enterprise venture." He estimates that it will employ three to four full time and four to six part time employees, with a loose target opening date of March 15, 2026.

On September 27, 2025, the Farm will host its 8th annual Harvest Fest of Thanks & Community Gathering. This is a free event open to the community with food from the Farm's partner restaurants, live entertainment, ponies, and a petting zoo. Parson said that this is a way of saying "thank you" to the community for its support. More details will be available online as they are finalized.

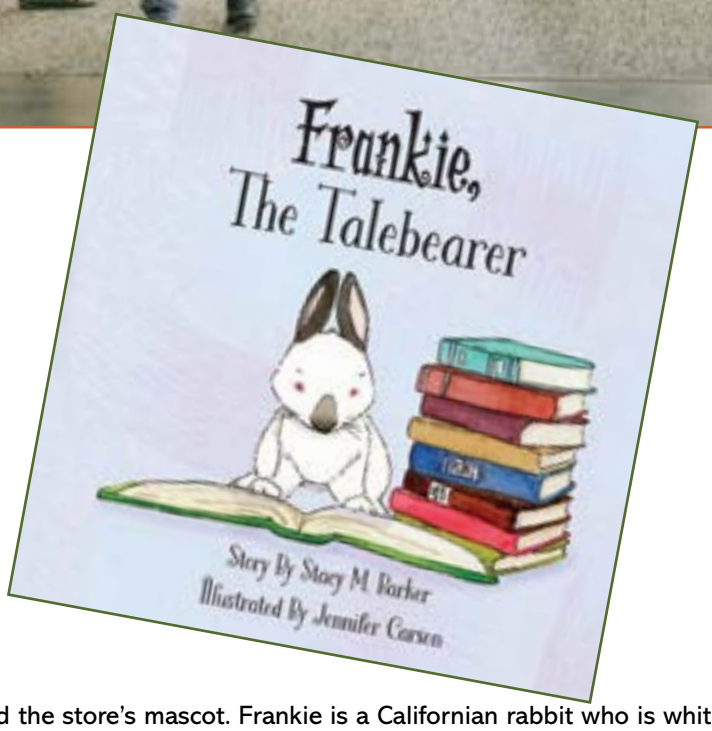
*We the People Opportunity Farm is located at 1301 South Harris Road, Ypsilanti, MI 48198. Its website is wtpof.org. Melvin Parson can be reached by email at info@wtpof.org or by phone at (734) 757-5067.*

## New Books by Area Authors

**Stacy Barker became the owner of the Talebearer Bookstore in Brooklyn, Michigan in February.**

This is a new career path for her after raising her now college-aged daughter as a stay-at-home mom with some part-time work in an interior design store. Around the same time, she adopted Frankie, short for Frankenstein, an adorable

### Author Stacy Barker and Frankie




rabbit and the store's mascot. Frankie is a Californian rabbit who is white with black ears and nose and reddish eyes. Bunnies with red or pink eyes are harder to adopt out, explained Barker, because people find them a little scary. However, she said, they are usually the friendliest. Visitors to the store, especially children, love interacting with Frankie when he co-hosts a monthly kids' story time.

Now, Frankie has his own book: *Frankie, the Talebearer*. It is a children's picture book written by Barker and illustrated with hand-painted watercolors by *The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal's* own Jennifer Carson. In it, Frankie's pink eyes turn out to be magical, and part of what make him so special, even though the other bunnies make fun of them at first. The book launched in late July with a signing at the store, by Barker and Frankie, who signed with a paw print stamp.

The book is recommended for ages five to nine. It is 32 pages, said Barker, a bit longer than most picture books, so readers "need to be able to pay some attention." It is available in Barker's bookstore and online through her website. The bookstore is located in the Choate Marketplace, an artsy collection of shops including a paint-your-own pottery venue, an art school, game lounge, art supply store, fair trade textile arts store, a unique food and kitchen gifts store, and a café .

*The Talebearer Bookstore is located at 102 North Main Street, Brooklyn, MI 49230. Its website is thetalebearerbookstore.com, and Stacy Barker can be reached by email at thetalebearer25@gmail.com or by phone at (517) 592-4011.*

# Upcoming Events

**What was previously known as the Kerrytown Bookfest since it began in the Ann Arbor Farmer's Market in 2004 has completed its transition to be run fully by the Ann Arbor District Library.**

The name changed to the A2 Community Bookfest in 2023 when the Kerrytown Bookfest Board first partnered with the library after a one-year hiatus due to the Covid-19 pandemic followed by a location change to Washtenaw Community College in 2022. In 2023 the Bookfest was renamed, move to the library, and put on in partnership between the Kerrytown Bookfest Board and the AADL. The Board disbanded in 2024, having ensured the continuation of the festival under the AADL.

This year's Bookfest will be held on Sunday, November 9 from 10:00 a.m.– to 5:00 p.m. at the Downtown Library. Book related events will be held all day including author talks, hands-on crafts for children and adults, story time readings for kids, writing workshops, and discussion groups. The vendor floor will be filled with around sixty local booksellers, authors, publishers, and book and paper related artisans. The library's publishing arm, 5th Avenue Press, will also hold its annual author reception celebrating the year's new book releases. The Press's new books include two picture books, two memoirs, and one book of literary fiction.

This year's keynote headliner is California-based Katie Kitamura, the bestselling author of *A Separation*, and *Intimacies*, which was one of the New York Times' "10 Best Books of 2021." Her newest novel, *Audition*, explores the roles people play with one another. She is known for well-crafted prose that examines themes of morality and identity. Her talks touch on language, her lived experience as an immigrant, and finding her voice as a writer.

This event is free to attend, and though vendors are juried, there is no fee to vend at the event. This, said AADL Librarian Emily Murphy, is part of the advantage of hosting big events at public libraries. No tickets are needed, and people can walk in or out throughout the day. Everyone is encouraged to stop by or stay all day to enjoy the rich Ann Arbor book community.

*More information and complete schedule of events is available at aadl.org/bookfest. The Ann Arbor District Library's downtown branch is located at 343 South 5th Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI 48104. Questions can be directed to bookfest@aadl.org.*

# New Practitioners and Businesses

**Julie Burbey, RN, started Chrysalis Holistics in 2023.**

A Registered Nurse located in Taylor, she offers a variety of holistic and energy healing modalities to help clients relieve stress, unblock limitations, remove negative energy, heal trauma, and improve their mental and physical health. She said that her energy healing journey began almost by accident. As a new psychiatric nurse, she was assigned as a holistic representative for her unit since she was interested in holistic therapies. The hospital allowed the use of aromatherapy and was actively looking into other modalities they could employ with patients, so Burbey signed up for a Reiki class, thinking she would learn about Reiki, not learn how to do it. That class resulted in her becoming a level 1 Reiki practitioner, starting her down a path of voracious learning.

Soon after this, she spent several months in Arizona helping her father recover from spinal surgery. She had begun receiving Reiki treatments in Michigan and wanted to continue while she was away, so she sought out a local practitioner. She discovered someone who offered Access Bars. This is a system that uses gentle touch on 32 points on the head, allowing the client to release thoughts, ideas, beliefs, feelings, attitudes, and emotions that hold them back from living their most joyful, optimal life. Burbey described it as "like defragmenting a hard drive," or "clearing a cache," moving out old information that is no longer useful

# What's New in the Community continued...

to open space for a calmer, quieter, more ordered and peaceful state of mind. She decided to try Access Bars and ended up diving into an intensive journey. She had been through several traumatic experiences in the preceding few years and felt "an immense change in me. I felt lighter from all the trauma and grief in a way that talk therapy never seemed to cut through." When she returned home to Michigan, she knew she wanted to be able to "bring the peace of mind to my patients as it was brought to me," so after finding a provider she trusted, she signed up for classes to become a practitioner.

Since then, she has learned and become certified in several other healing modalities. "I became a nurse to help people," she said, and explained that while pharmaceuticals have their place and do help people, they don't help with "listening to body, spirit, what your truth is and what you need." She explained that nutrition, supplements, and techniques like meditation to help quiet the mind and skills like self-soothing are also essential tools to create wellness. For holistic nurses, she said, this is at the center of what we do.

Along with Reiki, Burbey is now a Holy Fire Reiki Master practitioner, and Access Bars, she is trained in crystal healing and chakra tuning fork sound and vibration healing. She has a Rainbow Chakra Mat: a heated mat that incorporates crystals, far-infrared therapy, light therapy, and Pulsed Electromagnetic Field (PEMF) therapy to promote relaxation, detoxification, and chakra alignment. She also offers intuitive Tarot card readings.

Clients usually come to her with general anxiety, or with a medical problem they are trying to treat holistically. As a nurse, she can educate them and answer many of their questions. As an energy healer and intuitive, she can assist them with any of the modalities she offers. As part of a consultation, she gets an idea of what the client wants or needs, and which modalities can be most supportive for them. She said that everyone reacts to energy healing differently, as the body is processing. Some people might have a vision, some might need to talk about memories that bubble up, some cry, and some are so relaxed that they fall asleep. She said "your experience is your experience and whatever it is that's okay.... Be gentle with yourself; your body is processing a lot." She said that her background as a psychiatric nurse means that nothing anyone does or says will shock her, which some of her clients find reassuring.

Burbey currently works out of her home in Taylor, where she has a dedicated space with a massage table big enough for people up to six foot five inches tall. Eventually, she said, she will lease an office space as she builds her client roster.

*More information is available on chrysalis-holistics.com. Julie Burbey can be reached by email at Julie@chrysalis-holistics.com or by phone or text at (480) 518-1181.*

**Brighton-based registered aromatherapist Gina DeMeyere incorporated her aromatherapy practice, Gigi's Aromatic Apothecarie, in 2021.**

She had been learning about and working with alternative healing modalities and essential oils for over 25 years as part of her own health journey and taking care of her family and friends. When she retired from banking, she decided to create a second-act career from her knowledge and passion. During the global pandemic she sought formal training and became a certified aromatherapist through the National Association of Holistic Aromatherapists. Continuing her training, she has also been certified in trauma aromatherapy and artisan incense crafting.

DeMeyere specializes in custom blended aromatherapy using several methods of choosing the right type and balance of oils and method of delivery for the individual. These include chemistry and research on each oil, the perfumery model of the different aromatics, energetics, and elements of basic Chinese medicine. She prefers to meet one on one with clients in the consultation office she has created in her home, allowing her to collaborate with each person, getting feedback as they "build the aromatic prescription" together. "We're so used to an allopathic medicine culture," she said, in which we "do what the doctor says." With her process, she explained, the client has a part in their own healing, creating buy-in and ownership, increasing adherence to the co-created plan of use. She can also tell right away by the client's facial expression when a particular oil is not right for them. She explained that people who have tried aromatherapy in the past and haven't been helped, "just haven't been getting the right oils. If something doesn't work, we re-blend. Bodies change, hormones and chemistry change, and we have to be able to adapt and move with that."

Once the right oil blends have been determined, DeMeyere can create the perfect product for clients to use, whether it's a roll-on, balm, lotion, spray, or even incense. It all depends on the client's preferences and what they will be most likely to use on a regular basis.

DeMeyere's clients are generally seeking help with chronic conditions that have been difficult to resolve. Perimenopausal and menopausal women, people with chronic pain, and parents whose children are experiencing learning and attention issues have all experienced relief from symptoms. She stated that she is "not a life coach," but that she does make lifestyle suggestions based on four pillars: diet, exercise, stress management, and sleep. "There is a place for aromatics in all of those pillars," she said.

She is particular about the oils and aromatics she uses in everything she makes, she explained. The chemical components of the oil are important, and backed with lots of research, she said, so she does not purchase from companies that do not provide information on exactly what is in the bottle and the processes used to distill them. Freshness is important too, she added.

In addition to individual consultations, DeMeyere participates in vendor events where she sells more spiritually oriented products. A lifelong Catholic, she was inspired on a trip to Rome to create incenses, candles, anointing oils, and room sprays to invoke the scents of church in people's homes. This is something unique that no one else is doing, she said, but is very popular.

She does have a small website shop with aromatherapy items that are helpful for most people, but her passion is in customizing blends for individuals. Recently, she began offering a "quick custom:" a client can choose from a variety of drop-down menus for her to create a blend. "It's a quick way to get custom aromatics in peoples' hands," she said. She said that she loves to engage people one-on-one and educate on the benefits of aromatics. She said that many people dismiss aromatherapy as "magic, or crazy," but "there's a lot of science behind it." And "nothing that God created is bad; he gave us these beautiful plants and medicines and there's nothing wrong with any of it."

*Gina DeMeyere's website is gigisapothecarie.com. She can be reached by email through her website, or by phone at (810) 623-4389.*

## Submit your listing for the January through April 2026 issue.

*Please note that the "What's New in the Community" column is part of the editorial (not paid-for-advertising) content of The CWC Journal. The editors may or may not include what you submit. Whether your submission material is used or not will depend on space considerations, as well as other editorial issues, such as the need for high resolution photos and the overall mix of stories included in the "What's New in the Community" column in a given issue.*

***If you would like to submit information to be considered for this column, please email communitynews@crazywisdom.net.***

*The firm deadline for submissions for the next issue (January through April 2026) is November 1, 2025.*

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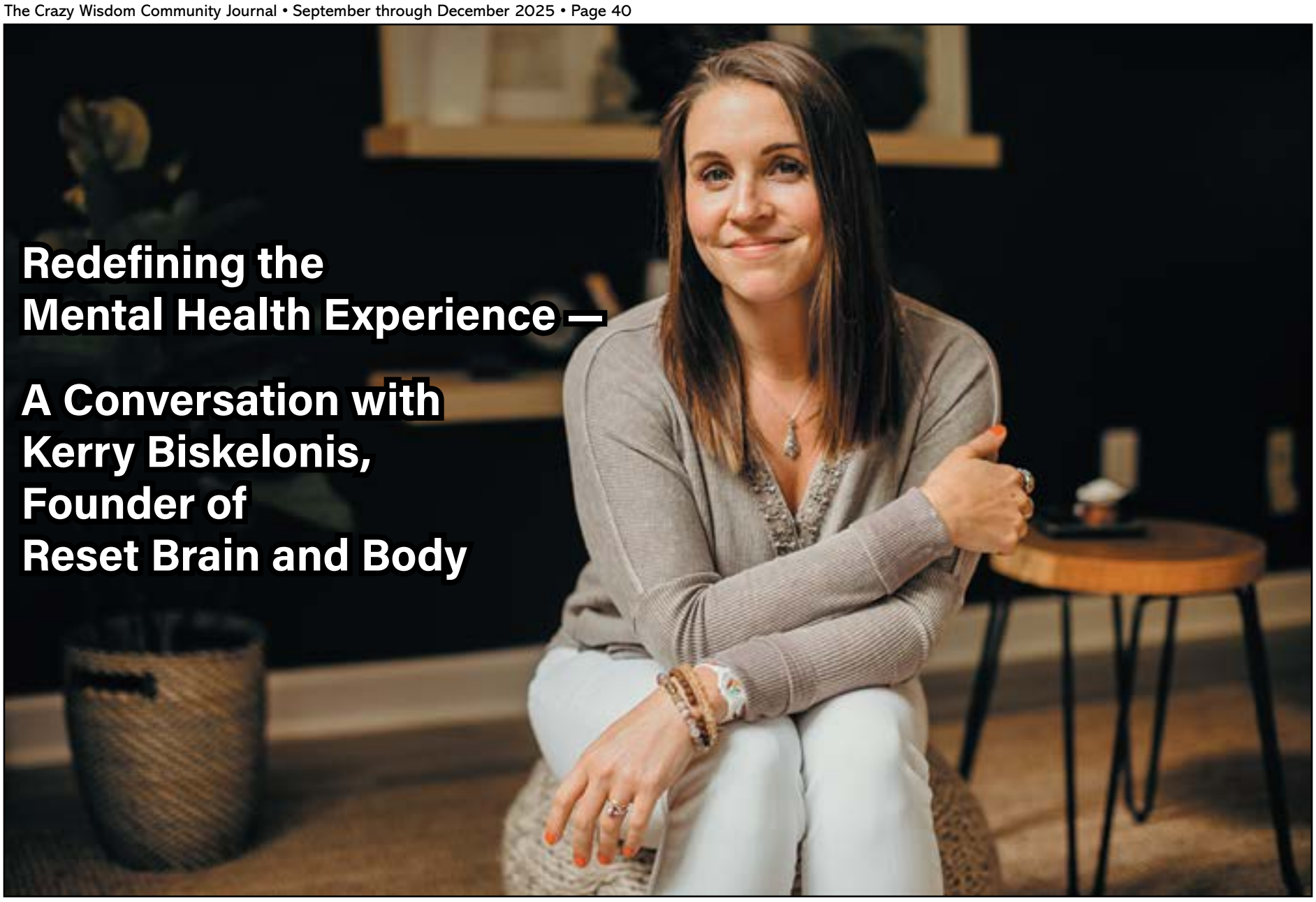

# Redefining the Mental Health Experience — A Conversation with Kerry Biskelonis, Founder of Reset Brain and Body

By Susan Slack

You might miss Reset Brain and Body while cruising up Packard. Next door to the Cobblestone Farm, the business lives in a cozy brown building nestled back among the trees. Kerry Biskelonis, Founder and Managing Director, explained, "All of our offices are located within green space. It's very important to have trees, to have natural light and access to outdoors, because connecting to nature is how we feel better; It's always quiet, like an oasis, so you won't find us in a high rise."

I visited the Ann Arbor location where Biskelonis gave a tour of the six restful rooms available for individual sessions with a practitioner and one larger room in the process of becoming a workshop space. The building is clean and bright and everyone smiles.

**"We aim to redefine the mental health experience. Traditionally, mental health has been about talking. And we have always felt that we have to get into our bodies. It's more than what happens from the neck up." — Kerry Biskelonis**

We settled onto her cushy office carpet and Biskelonis explained the mission at Reset Brain and Body. "We aim to redefine the mental health experience. Traditionally, mental health has been about talking. And we have always felt that we have to get into our bodies. It's more than what happens from the neck up. We look at your mental health as a whole, considering stressors, trauma, fitness, diet, sleep patterns, work/school, physical ailments, relationships, and life transitions." She pointed to an image on the wall. "That's why we have these five pillars: Rest. Breathe. Connect. Move. Nourish. They all work together to bring clarity to clients' mental health."

**Deep healing modalities available at Reset Brain and Body reach beyond conventional talk therapy to access and transform the root causes of challenges.**

She continued, "Holistic mental healthcare asks, 'how are we sleeping? Are we moving? Are we slowing down? How are we nourishing ourselves with food, with digital consumption, pollutants?' It's much, much more than just a diagnosis. It's an entire lifestyle that we look at."

With this broad approach, many issues can be addressed in a very individualized program. Who might benefit from what Reset Brain and Body offers? Those struggling with anxiety, depression, stress and burnout, sports performance, grief and trauma, chronic pain, postpartum issues, ADHD, and eating disorders.

Deep healing modalities available at Reset Brain and Body reach beyond conventional talk therapy to access and transform the root causes of challenges. These powerful approaches, in addition to yoga and dance, include Clinical Hypnosis, Trance Meditation, Internal Family Systems (IFS), Inner Child Healing, and Psychedelic Integration Therapy. Each offers a unique pathway to address core wounds, release trauma stored in your body, and reconnect with parts of yourself that have been disconnected or suppressed.
Biskelonis is originally from Chicago. "I started my career in Human Resources, then earned a BA and M.Ed from DePaul for counseling. Working full-time, living in downtown Chicago, I started practicing yoga to manage the stress of everything. I realized what I was experiencing in yoga had so many congruences with what I was learning about in psychology. Mind-body yoga-informed psychotherapy was fresh. I practiced yoga-informed psychotherapy and mindfulness-based psychotherapy until my family, my husband and baby, transitioned to Michigan."

**"We get a lot of referrals from existing employees who tell friends in the same field, that this is a great place to work. When we say we want to redefine the mental healthcare experience, that's also for providers." — Kerry Biskelonis**

That was seven years ago. She opened her first location in Plymouth, and another in Northville, and now an office in Ann Arbor. She has a team of over thirty-five professionals, each one skilled in at least one of the modalities. Her Human Resources background aids recruiting the right clinicians.

"More people are integrating techniques, are yoga-trained, and are also therapists. Half of our team is that way. We meet our clinicians through networking." Biskelonis enthusiastically considered, "We get a lot of referrals from existing employees who tell friends in the same field, that this is a great place to work. When we say we want to redefine the mental healthcare experience, that's also for providers."

**"Lifelong narratives that started when we were a child, that get re-triggered with every new event. My goal is for every client to get to maintenance mode—I'll see you every month, every three months, every six months, maybe we go two years and then you pop back. I'm going to be a steady resource for you, as long as I'm alive."**
**— Kerry Biskelonis**

"If you're working with somebody in distress, it's intense," Biskelonis shared. "We believe in creating a sustainable work environment where clinicians are able to be themselves—to be fully playful and authentic in how they do the work. That is why we offer so many different modalities.

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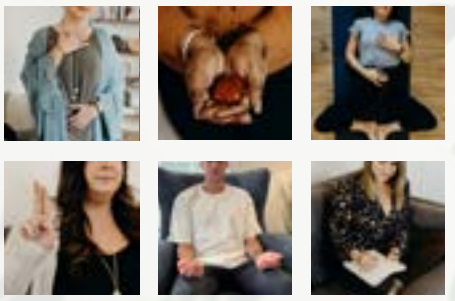

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We also are meeting the clinician where they're at, and so we've become a really attractive place to work."

And if there are financial concerns? Biskelonis reassured: "If someone comes in who can't afford to do this every week, I could maybe do it every other week or once a month. In reality, our mental health concerns go like this [a little roller coaster] throughout our lives, right? It's what we choose to do with it. It's how we grow our capacity to be more resilient. Maybe there's an acute issue. For example, I had a client who said, 'I'm afraid of flying. I have a 40th birthday trip. I need to get on the plane.' Well, we had three sessions. We did somatic work, we did clinical hypnosis work, and she was able to get on that plane, and I never saw her again."

"But most of the time, we're working through lifelong habits," Biskelonis noted. "Lifelong narratives that started when we were a child, that get re-triggered with every new event. My goal is for every client to get to maintenance mode—I'll see you every month, every three months, every six months, maybe we go two years and then you pop back. I'm going to be a steady resource for you, as long as I'm alive. And you tell me when you need to come back in, once you get to a stable place where you can be self- reliant. But you never have to go without care. You're never wrong or broken for asking for help again."

She wrapped up, "When people really get here and start to get deeper into the work, it becomes more of a spiritual journey to human connectedness, to a greater sense of purpose, to that remembering that we're just passing through. How does that change how we stress out about things, how we engage with people and how we judge so much? When we're able to let all of that go, we can come back to ourselves with so much more kindness and compassion and therefore offer it to other people and to the earth and to mother nature and make this world a better place."

To find out more, visit their comprehensive website. Cruise around a bit, sign up for a free weekly newsletter at the bottom of each page for resources, practical tips and tools, all written by Biskelonis. You'll also get notices of public workshops and talks offered around Ann Arbor.

*If you're not ready to fill out the form on the website, you are welcome to call a real live person at (734) 531-8563 who can explain the modalities that are on the form and discuss fees and insurance. If all is well, a client will be teamed with a practitioner. A lot of manpower goes into finding the right placement between therapist and the client. Reset Brain and Body is located at 2725 Packard St. #101 Ann Arbor 48108. Or visit them online at resetbrainandbody.com.*

*Susan Slack is an author, musician, and leads Dances of Universal Peace.*

# Health Coaches Support Healthy Change

By Laura Lyjack

In conventional medicine most people turn to a doctor first when they have a health concern. While doctors can play an important role in diagnosing and treating disease, they are just one player on the larger health care team. While a physician takes the lead on testing, medications, and treatments more often than not, lifestyle changes in addition to medications and treatments, are crucial to regaining good health.

However, a lifestyle change often takes effort and patience, and it's far too easy to backslide into bad old habits. One proven way to successfully integrate those new healthy habits is to get the help of a health coach. It is becoming more common to find health coaches working both independently and in tandem with physicians in both conventional and alternative practices.

"Doctors can recommend behavior changes that improve health but they rarely can provide long-term education and support", said Benjamin Ketcherside, an assistant professor of nursing and a health coach with a master's degree in lifestyle health science and coaching. Like many coaches, he works online with clients in many different locations. Typical lifestyle changes might include better nutrition, more exercise, stress reduction, improved sleep, or elimination of harmful substances like tobacco or excessive alcohol consumption.

**Lifestyle change, however, often takes effort and patience, and it's far too easy to backslide into bad old habits. One proven way to successfully integrate those new healthy habits is to get the help of a health coach.**

"Health coaching supports patients' buy-in to healthy change rather than just giving them orders," he explained. Health coaching borrows from psychology and counseling, and it focuses on positive behavior change. "It helps clients identify goals, strengths, and resources. It also provides an accountability partner."

Ketcherside is especially interested in the way coaching supports lifestyle changes for people with chronic health conditions such as diabetes and heart disease. He cites studies that show that about 50 percent of patients fail to follow through on the lifestyle changes recommended by their doctors. However, with the support of a health coach their success rates go up to 70 or 80 percent.

## Just what is a health coach?

Health coaches can come from a variety of different professions and backgrounds. They most commonly include nurses, nutritionist or dieticians, and physical therapist as well as yoga and exercise instructors.

But what makes them all health coaches, is specific training in guiding and motivating others to make change. Along with training, many coaches are certified by third party agencies that set guidelines for education and experience.

Probably the largest and best-known of these certifying agencies is the National Board for Health and Wellness Coaching (NBHWC). Other certifying agencies include the National Society of Health Coaches (NSHC), American Council on Exercise (ACE) and Institute for Integrative Nutrition (IIN).

Health coach training varies based on the certifying agency and from one training program to the next but nearly always includes training in the foundations of good health (diet, exercise, stress management, sleep, minimizing unhealthy substances, and maintaining good social connections) along with practical strategies for motivating and supporting change in clients.

## Where can you find a health coach?

Coaches are most often part of a larger health care team that might include a physician or alternative practitioner, a nutritionist, physical therapist, or even a behavioral health therapist. While alternative and holistic practitioners are most likely to recognize the benefits of health coaches, conventional physician practices are also beginning to bring health coaches into their practices to support patients in making lifestyle changes to control or reverse chronic conditions.

For example, in Ann Arbor, the IHA Lifestyle Medicine practice includes the support of health coaches, the Ann Arbor Veterans Administration hospital offers coaching services, and the University of Michigan offers health coaching through Wolverine Wellness.

Many people turn to online resources for health coaching, also. Health coaches can be found on sites like Parsley Health for support in making changes to improve nutrition, movement, sleep, and stress management, Noom for weight loss and diabetes prevention, or Headspace for mental health coaching.

## Is health coaching covered by insurance?

The answer is probably no, at least not yet. Sometimes coaching with a registered dietician can be covered by insurance. Or some employers may provide online health benefits that include health coaching, especially related to weight loss. In other cases, clients may be able to use their health savings accounts to pay for coaching.

However, that may change soon. The NBHWC has led the charge to change billing codes that could pave the way for health coaching to be covered by insurance. A few insurance plans and Medicare advantage plans already cover coaching.

**Health coaches can come from a variety of different professions and backgrounds. They most commonly include nurses, nutritionists or dieticians, and physical therapists as well as yoga and exercise instructors.**

Even the American Medical Association is an advocate for giving health coaches a bigger role in patient care, teaching in their AMA Steps Forward education hub, "By bridging the gap between the physician and patient, health coaches can help practices improve patient engagement in their care, leading to healthier patients with better outcomes."

**Eila Rain Buszko, a remote functional diagnostic nutrition practitioner with Ann Arbor Holistic Health.**

## Eila Rain Buszko: Coaching with a focus on women's health

As a functional diagnostic nutrition practitioner with Ann Arbor Holistic Health as well as in her private practice, Eila Rain Buszko said her role as a health coach is a central part of her work with clients. Health coaching helps clients get over mental hurdles and limiting beliefs and empowers them to feel confident and in control of their health. While doctors may spend 20 to 30 minutes with a patient and leave them with recommendations for changes, they can't guide patients in making those changes.

Buszko works with both men and women with various health issues, but she specializes in women's health related to hormonal imbalances. "Fluctuating hormones can affect everything from digestion to mood to chronic diseases. Women often feel unheard or misdiagnosed," she said. She herself experienced difficult periods, PMS, acne, and fatigue for many years until she implemented changes in her diet and habits.

"I support women in terms of menstrual health, perimenopause, menopause, diving deep into gut health and digestive disorders, thyroid health, blood sugar regulation, weight management autoimmune disease, and everything hormonal related." The list is a long one, and she explains that hormone regulation can be key to regaining health for many women.

As a diagnostic nutrition practitioner, intensive lab testing is usually the starting point with any client. Buszko uses the results to take a deep dive into what's going on with her client's body and get a complete picture of imbalances or deficiencies. "It's really a root cause approach to healing," she said. "I want to dig down deep and answer the why behind any health concerns so I can help my clients heal holistically."

She usually meets online with clients for 45 minutes every other week. She starts by listening and understanding her client's unique story. "The program is custom designed to fit their needs," she explained. Together they work to develop what she calls the three-legged stool of good health: gut health, blood sugar balance, and overall detoxification.

Once she and her client come up with a plan and they're ready to begin to make lifestyle changes, that's when health coaching comes into play. She is there to support and encourage her clients as they build new habits and make positive changes in diet, managing stress, or getting more active.

"As a coach I support clients in implementing change. I consider myself a copilot in their journey toward health."

*Find more about Buszko at annarborholistichealth.com and eilarain.com*

## Christy DeBurton: Yoga plus coaching for healthy aging

Without a doubt, yoga is Christy DeBurton's primary focus, but she integrates health coaching into her one-on-one sessions with clients as a way of adding value. In addition to her yoga training, she completed Harvard Medical School's Executive Education Lifestyle Medicine + Wellness Coaching course which taught her skills in motivating people to make change and adopt a healthier lifestyle.

"My coaching approach is very informal," she said. "When I work with clients, I learn about the whole person, and their whole life. I get to know them holistically and very naturally."

Coaching usually occurs as part of the normal conversations she has with her clients. They'll turn to her for advice on what to eat, how to improve their sleep, or manage stress and that opens a door for her to guide and motivate them to make healthier choices.

While she works with clients of all ages, she specializes in one-on-one sessions for clients over 50 who are looking to stay strong and healthy as they age. Currently her oldest client is 81. She works with clients who've had knee and hip replacements or have back and neck pain. She also teaches clients how to modify their yoga practice to prevent and improve many age-related health problems including menopause, high blood pressure, osteoporosis, and arthritis.

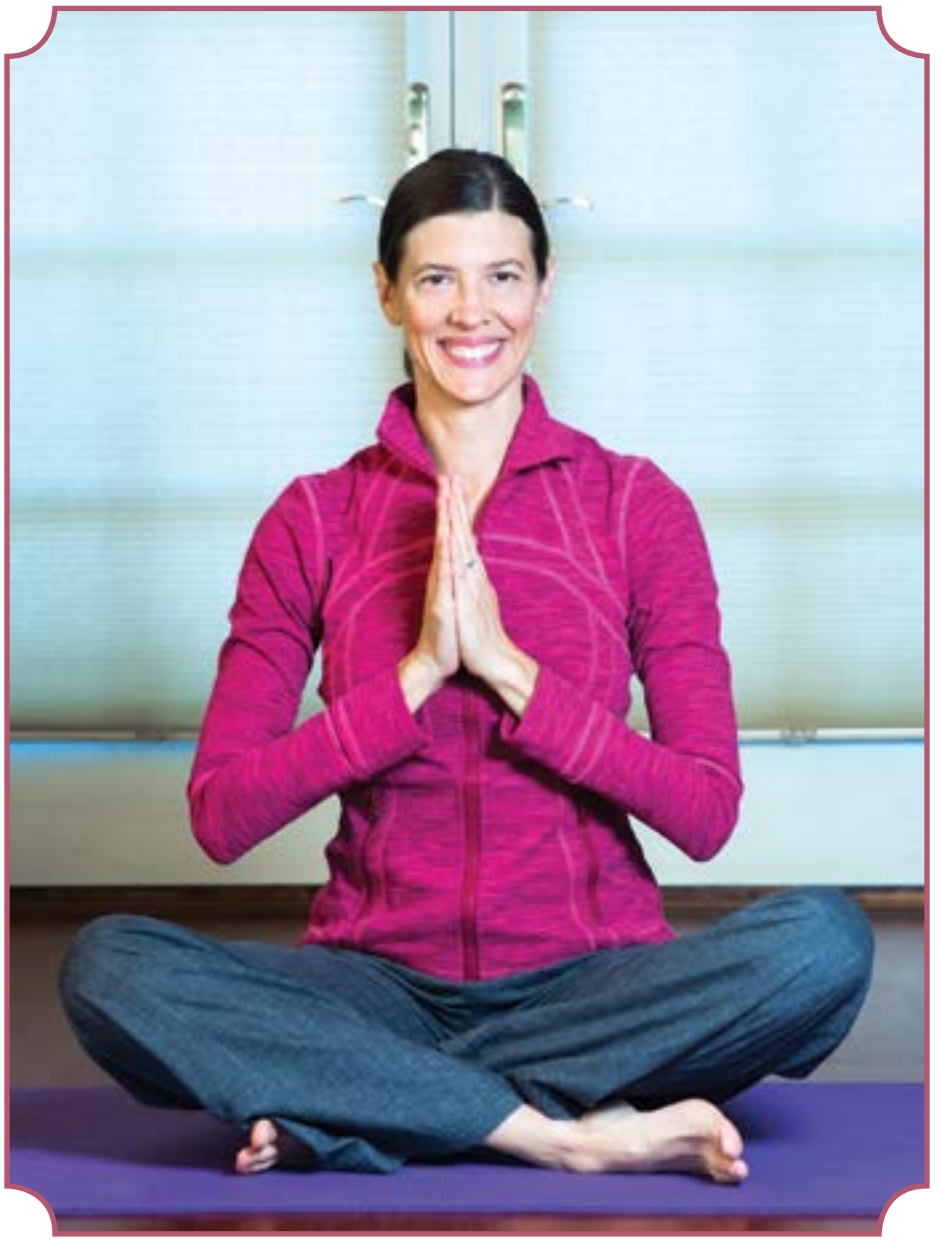
But, if she has one overall message that guides both her coaching and her yoga instruction, it is this: managing stress is key to good health. "Stress affects your health whether you realize it or not. Even if you think you're handling it," DeBurton explained.

"We're conditioned to live in this chaos of the world, but we're just not meant to live in the stressful situations we have. Your body is responding to stress whether you know it or not."

She works with people to make the kinds of small changes that reduce the effect of stress. "Breathing, relaxing, calming your mind. It's not just about how you do poses on the yoga mat but how you take care of yourself in your whole life," she said. "It's the whole body, mind, spirit connection."

"I really believe that if people took better care of themselves and were more compassionate toward themselves, the world would be a better place."

*Find more about DeBurton at yogaroomannarbor.com*



**Christy DeBurton integrates health coaching into her one-on-one sessions with clients as a way of adding value.**

# Health Coaches Support Healthy Change continued....

**Brandalyn Riedel brings a scientific approach to her health coaching.**

## Brandalyn Riedel: Coaching to control diabetes and dementia

With a Ph.D in neuroscience and a background in Alzheimer's research, Brandalyn Riedel brings a scientific approach to her health coaching. In her private practice, she coaches clients who have risk factors for diabetes, dementia, and other chronic conditions. Together they work toward integrating lifestyle changes that reduce risk and improve their current health. Her specific approach is customized to each client and their needs.

In addition to that Ph.D, Riedel is a certified functional diagnostic practitioner and a certified health coach through the FDN training program which provided her with the tools to order and interpret lab testing as well as guide her clients toward change.

She is also trained in the Bredesen Protocol, an approach to preventing and possibly even reversing cognitive decline that addresses nutrition, inflammation, hormone imbalances, toxin exposure, sleep, and insulin resistance.

Outside of her private practice, Riedel coaches participants in a University of Michigan study looking at the effects of low carb diets on participants with insulin resistance, both diabetes and a related condition in women called polycystic ovary syndrome.

Insulin resistance is the common thread running through her research and approach to health coaching. Alzheimer's disease is sometimes referred to as "Type 3 diabetes" due to its correlation with insulin resistance. Reiedel herself was diagnosed with atypical diabetes and has implemented diet and lifestyle changes to control it.

While she is an advocate of low carb approaches, she also is open to other strategies and has coached clients using low fat diets to control and prevent chronic conditions.

Who most benefits from health coaching? "It can be really useful for people with chronic conditions such as diabetes and hypertension," Riedel said. "In general people who see results are those who are ready for change but feel unsure how to get started."

She added, "The most important piece for success is being open, curious, and willing. Even if a person doesn't feel totally confident about making changes, a coach can help them unlock some of those roadblocks."

*Find more about Riedel at bodycresilience.com*

*Laura Lyjak is an RN who writes about health and wellness. She was a writing teacher and public relations writer for many years and made a transition to nursing in her 50s. She lives in Dexter, raised her two sons in Ann Arbor and has three awesome grandkids.*

## Some other Local Health Coaches in Ann Arbor and the Surrounding Areas

### Dixie Reynolds

dixiehealthcoach.com
Email: dixie@dixiehealthcoach.com
Phone: (309) 750-2911

A practicing nurse for over 30 years, and a current Functional Medicine student at the School of Applied Functional Medicine, Reynolds was tired of seeing people struggle with various health-related issues that were not being addressed in the modern healthcare system. She noted on her website that, "We take things like insomnia, fatigue, joint pain, headaches, indigestion, and bloating as normal or easily fixable with a pill, when actually they are symptoms that something is wrong and we need to pay attention, find the cause, and fix the problem before it becomes big."

### Elaine Oberlin-Nesbit

a2optimalnutrition.com
elaine@a2optimalnutrition.com
(734) 231-0990

Oberline-Nesbit helps busy, professional mothers learn to eat nutrient-dense, whole food to increase energy, relieve stress, and glow from the inside out. As a Nutritional Therapy Practitioner, Oberlin-Nesbit focuses on balancing six nutritional foundations, through a food-first approach, to support a client in reaching optimal health. In addition, she also focuses on various lifestyle factors such as sleep, stress, and movement. She approaches each client as a unique, bio-individual to tailor nutritional therapy to a client's specific needs.

### Lisa Nogueira Wellness

Photo by Tamara Wade

lnwell.com
lisa@lnwell.com
(734) 315-0525

Lisa Nogueira is a certified Functional Nutrition Practitioner, Health Coach, and Integrative Bodyworker who specializes in lymphatic therapy and holistic gut support. Through years of working with clients, Nogueria has discovered that true health always comes back to the foundations—how we eat, move, think, handle stress, and structure our daily habits. She is dedicated to helping clients strengthen these core foundations for lasting well-being.

### Nutrition by Mel

nutritionbymel.com/coaching
mboehmernutrition@gmail.com

Mel Sulaver's private coaching sessions have been designed to help you succeed. As a registered dietitian and certified sports nutritionist, she is working to bridge the gap between women's health and performance nutrition, striving to teach you how to work with your physiology rather than against it. She is convinced that understanding our bodies, it the key to unlocking its potential. As a young dietician she spent many years working in the hospital system and physician's offices and continuously found herself running up against policy and red tape. She started Nutrition by Mel to empower women and athletes, and also focuses on women in the postpartum stage, and those navigating perimenopause and menopause.

## Jessica Marcus

vedanutrition.co

As an integrative and functional registered dietitian nutritionist, health coach, and specialist in women's metabolic health, Jessica Marcus has coached hundreds of men and women in order to take back their health using food and fitness. No fads, no harsh detoxes—all *evidence-based, practical* advice. Marcus has spent years diving deep into Integrative and Functional Nutrition, exploring the connections between diet, gut health, stress levels, genetics, and lifestyle choices with how the systems in the body function. Veda Nutrition is a culmination of both her personal and professional experiences. According to her website, Marcus loves "finding the place where science, wellness, and real life meet. And when it comes to nutrition philosophy, I've experienced everything from raw vegan to paleo/keto and remain non-dogmatic."

## Katy Gladwin

sacredrootshealing.org
Email: katy@sacredrootsservices.com

Raised in Ann Arbor, Gladwin is a certified birth doula, and a nationally board certified health and wellness coach specializing in women's health. She said that "the idea of being able to really help women make lasting change in their bodies and bring attention to their own intuitive knowing about what's best for them has been very exciting." She has attended rigourous coaching trainings focusing on fertility, pregnancy and postpartum, secondary infertility, and adrenal fatigue, looking at the whole person through a functional medicine lens. She most recently completed a certification in functional health through perimenopause and menopause. As a confessed serial-student, Gladwin has taken countless courses and seminars on how to best support our bodies, but she says that her best teacher has been "Working with and seeing how food, rest, and mindfulness can really have an impact on myself and those around me."

Read the articles Gladwin has written for The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal at our website at crazywisdomjournal.com/search?q=katy%20gladwin.

**Katy Gladwin of Sacred Roots Healing**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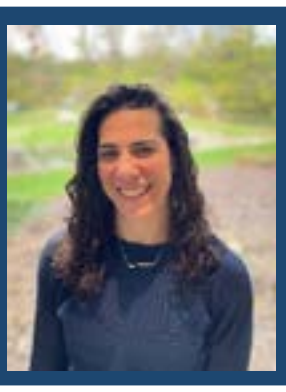

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# A Miracle Led *the Way*

## a talk with Naturopath, Dr. Dennis Cousino

By Samantha Beidoun • Photo by Hilary Nichols

*Dr. Dennis Cousino, ND, HHP, CFT of Dynamic Health lets us in on a journey of pain, faith, and healing in his own life—an experience that can only be described as miraculous. Dr. Dennis Cousino was raised in Tecumseh, MI and stil lives in the area with his wife and three boys. He completed his Naturopathic Doctorate at the First University of Naturopathy and has been practicing for 15 years specializing in chronic digestive and adrenal disorders. He is also a certified QRA Practitioner, a member of the American Drugless Practitioners Association, the International Sports Science Association, and has developed his own form of Energetic Kinesiology, called BioDynamic Testing. Dr. Cousino now shares his passion for healing with his patients to help them discover the root causes of the body's symptoms.*

**What first sparked your interest in this type of work?**

**Dr. Dennis Cousino:** I started off in sports medicine but was told that there weren't a lot of openings for physical therapists, or in that field in general, and that I wasn't going to make a lot of money. So, I changed paths and started going to school for pre-med. At that time, I was training for a triathlon, and I started having pain in my back. I thought it was just a pulled muscle, but by the third night I ended up in the emergency room–which became the start of seven years of literal hell. I was in such great pain that I'd pass out unconscious. I saw so many doctors; I was going downhill fast, and I even went to different countries to get help.

Eventually, I came to find that I had a parasite that got up into my body and was laying eggs inside of me. From all of the doctors that I saw [and received no answers] I lost confidence in what they were doing. Nobody had any great solutions for me, so I started to see people off the radar so-to-speak, and started getting some actual help, and then took interest in a naturopathic college, and decided to do that to really help people.

**In our conversation, I've heard you mention your faith. Do you attribute your faith to healing you in your health crisis and ultimately leading you here today?**

**Dr. Dennis Cousino:** Absolutely! I was in such a bad place before my body became renewed. I had to drive down to Georgia for some schooling. My pastor's wife gave me a CD of a pastor out of California, and he didn't say anything unusual that I hadn't heard before, but he was speaking of how the enemy works and how the enemy gets authority when we give place and meditate on the bad. Because I had been stewing and meditating on how bad this pain situation was, I decided to focus and give a stance on what I wish would happen instead. For the entire time I was driving from Ohio all the way to Tennessee I just kept repeating "I'm healed, I'm getting healed." What was crazy was I stopped at a rest stop somewhere near Nashville, and I remember getting out of the vehicle, walking to the facilities, and I felt really weird–like everything was in slow motion. I even noticed a bird flying by, and I was staring at it in slow motion. When I came out of the restroom, I just didn't feel rushed. I decided to sit at a picnic bench and was appreciating how peaceful everything was. I probably hung out there for about 45 minutes. And I was just absorbed in this good feeling. I was typically a fast-paced, needing to be told to slow down type of person, so it was out of character for me to be able to take time to focus and notice.

Then, when I got to the hotel in Georgia, and was getting ready to get into bed, I heard a voice that sounded like it was outside of me and inside me at the same time. It said, "Trust me." And it was crazy because I didn't have a fear of the voice. I just knew it wasn't me, and I knew what it meant. I was so tired and so overwhelmed, but comforted by the voice, that I went to bed without taking my pain medication. I woke up in the same way I went to bed, the sheets were not thrown about from any thrashing of pain that usually happened. I actually slept. And that was the beginning of being pain free. It was a miracle, honestly.

**Do you think there is a place for modern medicine, or should people seek out more holistic approaches?**

**Dr. Dennis Cousino:** I think there's a place for modern medical intervention. I often refer to it as a red, yellow, green light. I think sometimes in the red light, people need to stabilize a serious situation, but they should not be sustaining [themselves] in that area. And there are a lot of chronic conditions that absolutely can be remedied and worked out through more functional naturopathic approaches that do not need any type of medical intervention. So, it just depends on the situation.

If our regular medical doctors aren't finding what's going on, instead of going in this never-ending circle, people should seek alternative methods. There are a lot of things that are being overlooked [by allopathic doctors]. There are cloaked disturbances that are hidden in people's bodies, that are not being revealed by blood tests. Symptoms are not the best indicator for how good or bad off a person is because every symptom is a courtesy for survival.

We tend to demonize symptoms and want to kill them rather than trying to help our body work itself out and regulate. Take a fever for example. You don't kill a fever, you regulate it. If you have a fever of 103-104, you bring it down to 102 and you let the immune system optimize and kill whatever is causing it. A certain level of pain for a short time is helping the body to work it out, but we don't want to sustain any symptoms–that's what can create more problems. So, the problem is that we're suppressing things with a lot of medication as a means of relief. We're trying to make a person have a false sense of being fixed–when it's just suppression. It's like the game Whack-a-Mole. A symptom pops up somewhere, it gets suppressed, another symptom then pops up and makes things look like a different condition and nothing is being solved at the root. You don't just find a needle in a haystack—you play the game of elimination.

**What can people expect when they come in seeking care from your practice?**

**Dr. Dennis Cousino:** I will have an initial evaluation and talk with them. The first thing that we focus on is making sure that we're establishing systemic circuit communication. We're making sure that the body is partnered with us to help it to heal. I don't really just focus on one area, but on restoring cell communication. And the second phase is stabilizing adrenal, liver, and digestive function. When we have these things working, we're going to be more optimized to help deal with the causes. But to not deal with these things first, then we're failing to realize why the symptoms were there to begin with. It's kind of a sequence I use with everyone.

**When did you start Dynamic Health and how has it changed since the beginning?**

**Dr. Dennis Cousino:** Dynamic Health started seventeen years ago. My brain has changed. I can naturally speak the language of the field rather than needing to try to recall what I've been taught. I'm more efficient in what I do now. I can associate conditions better and resolve things more quickly based on knowing where I'm going. The saying "you don't know where you're going unless you know where you came from" rings true. With my experience now I know how to connect more of the dots. I'm a big respecter of certain principles, like the law of individuality. I think that if you are always focusing on some cookie cutter protocol, you need to do something else, because people are very unique, even with similar conditions. And I may have different starting points with people. I could have somebody with diabetes that has a lot of anxiety and depression, and I can have another person who has diabetes who doesn't have those conditions. So, if I don't stabilize their stress pattern, then I'm not optimizing healing. Whereas with the other person, I may need to put more focus into giving them a better exercise plan.

**What are some key services that you offer?**

**Dr. Dennis Cousino:** We do bio feedback. We do alpha thermography, which is an advanced form of thermography. We do pelotherapy where we're hoping to remove traumas and reconstruct from lack of communication from one area of the body to others. And I develop regimens for people, but the deeper thing I do is functional medicine. It's going to be troubleshooting and really kind of carefully listening to the body and the symptoms and tracing out where the causes are coming from. My intent is to get to the root of everything. I don't want to just try to trim a branch, and they feel better for a little bit and then it manifests back into something else–because that's what happened to me. I want to actually find out the full picture and make resolutions.

*To reach Dr. Dennis Cousino and learn more about Dynamic Health, visit dynamichealthservices.com. The office is located at 6360 Jackson Road Suite M, Ann Arbor, MI 48103. For more information call (734) 997-9400.*

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**"If our regular medical doctors aren't finding what's going on, instead of going in this never-ending circle, people should seek alternative methods. There are a lot of things that are being overlooked [by allopathic doctors]. There are cloak disturbances that are hidden in people's bodies, that are not being revealed by blood tests. Symptoms are not the best indicator for how good or bad off a person is because every symptom is a courtesy for survival."**

**—Dr. Dennis Cousino, Dynamic Health**

# German New Medicine: Exploring the New Paradigm with BRIANA JOHNSON

By Kaili Brooks • Photo by Hilary Nichols

In recent years, German New Medicine (GNM) has risen in the alternative medicine field. First discovered in the 1970s by Dr. Ryke Geerd Hamer, GNM examines how intense shocks, or conflicts, manifest in the brain and result in symptoms ranging from ear infections to cancer. I talked with Briana Johnson, a Metro Detroit GNM practitioner, who walked me through the basics of this complex healing framework.

**Kaili Brooks**: The 5 Biological Laws are the central tenets of GNM. In brief, how would you describe them?

**Briana Johnson:**

The First Biological Law is the conflict. It's the unexpected shock to the system. It feels isolating and alone. What is shocking to you may not be shocking to me, so it impacts us in different ways. It simultaneously affects the psyche, brain, and a specific organ. Our psyche perceives the conflict and shows itself on the brain layer. Dr. Hamer did thousands of CT scans to prove that concentric rings appear on the brain during this conflict-active phase.

The Second Law is the law of two phases. When you have the conflict you go into the heightened state of stress—or the conflict-active phase. You're going to see anxiety, rumination, anger. Your body puts you into this state to look for the resolution. In the jungle, this would be the tiger chasing you; in the modern day, it's what you feel while driving. Once you find that resolution, your body enters the healing phase. When you're in the conflict active phase, your body can't handle the symptoms. You don't have time for diarrhea when the tiger is chasing you. When the tiger leaves, your body has the space to repair, and you begin to show the symptoms. The epi-crisis is the peak of the symptoms: this is where you'd identify as having a virus or a UTI, but this is when your body is doing the most repair. After this process resolves, you return to 'normatonia'.

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The Third Law is the law of the ontogenetic system. In your brain you have the endoderm, the old mesoderm, the new mesoderm, and the ectoderm. Essentially, this is where your psyche determines what kind of event a conflict was. It could affect your pancreas. Your brain determines this and signals the organ to adapt the way it needs to.

The Fourth Law is the law of microbes. This is where our body is utilizing our microbes to assist in our healing. Whatever happened in the conflict-active phase, mycobacteria, fungi, parasites, viruses, these are what show up to assist in repair. During the healing phase, your body reacts in the opposite way it did during the conflict phase to restore your body. Using something like an antibiotic kills all the bacteria that assists in the clean-up process. They are our friendly helpers. When you show up to a house fire and there are firemen there, you don't blame the firemen. So, microbes are present at the site, but it's not their fault.

The Fifth Law is the quintessence that everything that is happening is working for our survival. There is nothing that our body is doing that's not trying to keep us alive. It's that trust in our body; everything is working for us. We can live in the trust that we're not sick, diseased, or broken. Everything is working for us always. There are, however, three exceptions to these laws which are physical injury, malnutrition, and poisoning.

**Kaili Brooks**: What is the core essence of GNM?

**Briana Johnson:** The core essence for me was to trust my body and the symptoms I'm experiencing. When symptoms show up, it doesn't have to be a fearful experience of our body attacking itself or I'm diseased. When I was first going down the holistic path I couldn't cook on pans I wanted to use or buy detergent because everything was out to get me. GNM forced me to look at my internal perception and how that was shaping my life. When you feel safe to heal and repair, that's when the symptoms show up. It's not an experience of having to fix yourself. It allowed me to finally breathe. Symptoms may be uncomfortable, but it's ok to trust your body. Something will always occur that you won't have prepared for, but living in that fear is what needs to change. Live, be present in your life, and know that your body is always working to keep you alive.

**Kaili Brooks:** What does the healing of a biological conflict look like? Is there a special process to resolve it?

**Briana Johnson:** A lot of times it can be very quick. You can drive in the car and be fearful, someone is about to hit you, and they don't, so you can relax. When you get down to chronic illness, it shows me the individual is continuously having the same conflict. You're stepping on this track multiple times throughout your life. Something like a separation conflict affects the epidermis layer and shows up as psoriasis, eczema, or hives. This can be very significant. In these cases, we want to look at a perceptional change or a practical change. Sometimes perceptional change doesn't work, and you need to permanently separate from the situation that is causing the conflict. It takes deep, inner work. You can also live in your symptoms. You decide what you want to do.

When symptoms show up, it doesn't have to be a fearful experience of our body attacking itself or I'm diseased. When I was first going down the holistic path I couldn't cook on pans I wanted to use or buy detergent because everything was out to get me. GNM forced me to look at my internal perception and how that was shaping my life.

**Kaili Brooks:** What is the role of a practitioner in GNM? Is this something you can undertake yourself?

**Briana Johnson:** I want to say you can become your own doctor and evaluate your conflicts and symptoms. It's sovereign to be able to be your own healer and not outsource all the time. You can become the practitioner for your family. When it comes to chronic illness, having that practitioner there to walk this path and give you an outside perspective of the conflict helps. I bring you that point that you couldn't see due to the stress of it all. I do a lot of talk therapy where we find that true resolution, whether practical or perceptional. I do a little TFT (tapping) to help calm the nervous system, some use breathwork or Reiki, but knowing the root [of the issue] helps you to release the conflict.

**Kaili Brooks:** Could you give an example of a conflict you've healed or helped someone heal?

**Briana Johnson:** I had shoulder pain in my right side for close to eight years. I did chiropractic, fascial release therapy, all of that. Anything in the musculoskeletal system is a self-devaluation conflict. When I learned this, I found it all linked back to me doing hair and not charging enough for what I did. When I began seeing my value and charging what I was worth, my shoulder pain disappeared. I've worked with a client who had TMJ; the grinding of the teeth is the healing phase and is associated with wanting to 'bite back' and say what you need to say. After resolving that, she no longer has TMJ.

*For more information, or to work with Briana Johnson, visit* sovereignwombanwellness.com *or email* sovereignwombanwellness@gmail.com. *She specializes in women's health, working on symptoms that manifest in the reproductive, menstrual, and breast realms. To learn more about German New Medicine, visit learninggnm.com/home.html.*

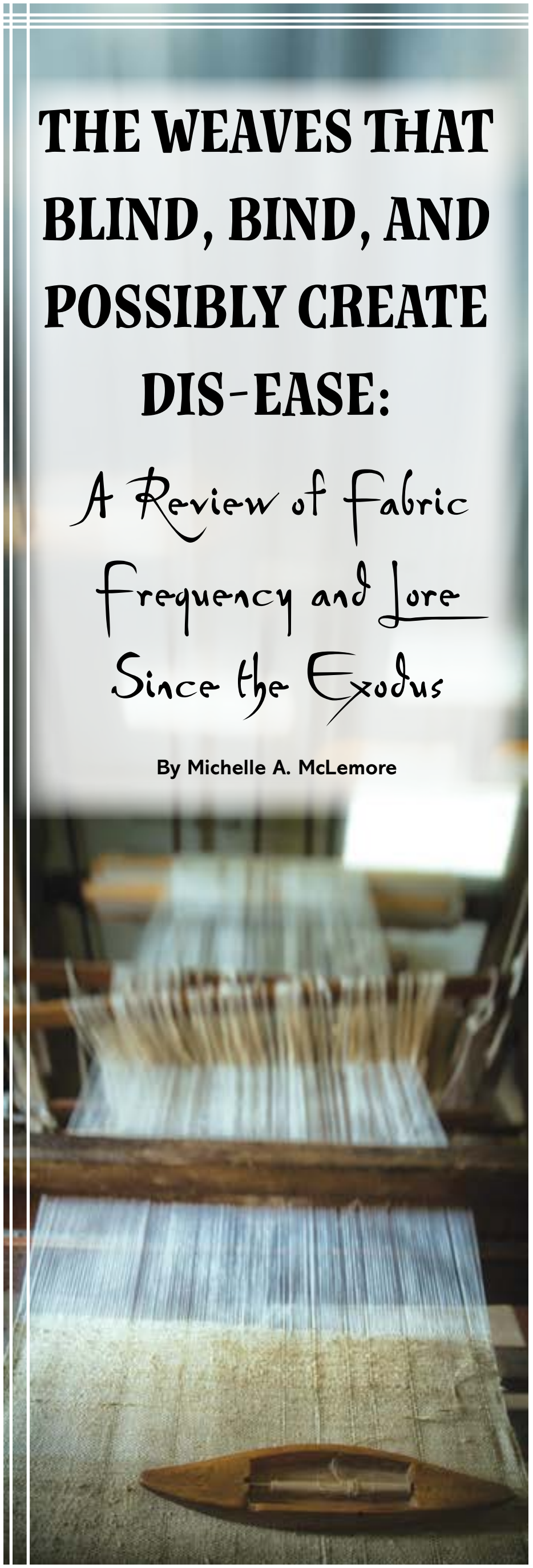
*Kaili Brooks is the calendar editor for The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal. Outside of her work on the magazine, she is a Secondary English major at Eastern Michigan University, a toddler mom, and a lifelong student of holistic living.*

Briana Johnson

# THE WEAVES THAT BLIND, BIND, AND POSSIBLY CREATE DIS-EASE:

## A Review of Fabric Frequency and Lore Since the Exodus

**By Michelle A. McLemore**

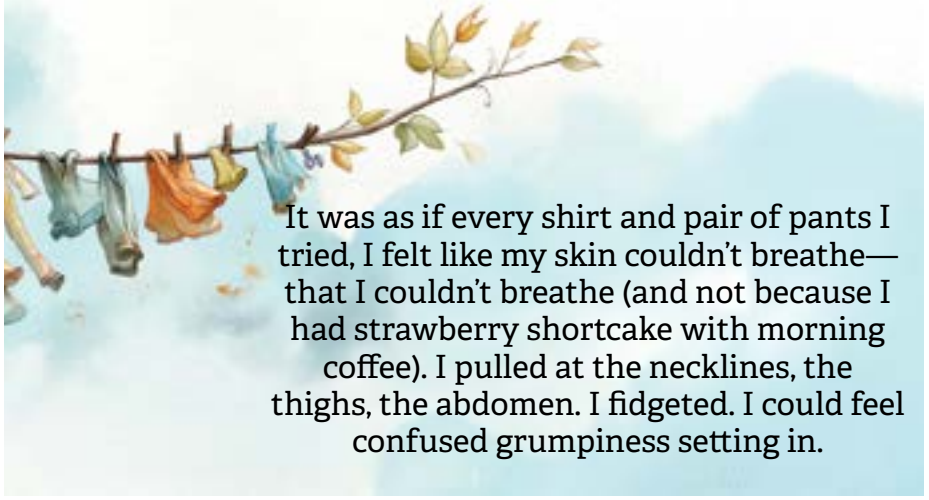


**It came over me one morning.** I dressed, and undressed, and redressed several times. Shirts and pants I had worn many times suddenly made me feel claustrophobic. The colors were good, the styles attractive. This wasn't a "what do I want to wear?" indecisive moment. No, it was as if every shirt and pair of pants I tried, I felt like my skin couldn't breathe—that I couldn't breathe (and not because I had strawberry shortcake with morning coffee). I pulled at the necklines, the thighs, the abdomen. I fidgeted. I could feel confused grumpiness setting in.

Starting to slightly panic, I unrolled a pair of pants made in Nepal that I'd purchased at a fair. They were baggy and so thin, that when held up to light, you could see impressions through the pant leg on the other side of the room. They were made from 100% cotton. Within a few seconds, all agitation subsided, and I felt my breathing normalize. *Well, that was odd,* I thought.

Was this just a distress feeling, neuro-oddity? A sensory flag? According to *AutismResponseTeam.com,* many people (both on and off the spectrum) prefer soft fabrics such as cotton, satin, silk, and denim. Fabrics have the power to soothe as well as irritate. Their texture sensitivity signs include the following:

- Itching or scratching at the neck or around areas where tighter clothing makes contact with skin.
- Preference for bare feet over socks.
- Wanting to wear the same things over and over (because they offer calm).
- Pulling or tugging at their clothes.
- Auditory triggers like the sound of a zipper, Velcro, or corduroy legs rubbing together.



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Life seems too short these days to fight with yourself about wearing a certain outfit. But what if it is more than just something "itchy"? What if it is about constraining one's breath, or energy? Whether the perspective is that the world is "waking up" or settling back into "New Age" (which are actually "old age") ideas, the fact is that newer technology is capable of analyzing this realm in ways that it could not in the past—which of course, creates more questions, more possibilities, and more challenges to religious and political leaders who would rather their followers well, frankly, simply follow and not question.

Can clothing material impact subtle energy and how our physical and energetic body communicates with the outer world throughout the day? An on-line search for "frequency of clothing," populates numerous business and personal website claims that clothing materials have differing energy frequencies. The companies claim that certain frequencies either bolster health or deplete it—similar to the claims about canned food versus fresh food and essential oils.

However, like those claims, all seem to direct back to only one or two initial proponents of the idea and vague research mentions. Does that mean it's a marketing hoax? Not necessarily. Again, science can only "prove" something when it is advanced enough to prove it. However, my research-minded brain did become a bit more skeptical.

Every site that I visited, while researching frequency or vibration of clothing, referenced one 2003 study by naturopathic Dr. Heidi Yellen and her husband, Sephardic Rabbi Ben-Hayil Yellen…a study I could not find anywhere to read for myself. The January-March 2013 issue of *Hebrews Today Journal*, however, was dedicated to discussing their beliefs, as both Yellens were senior editors and researchers for the publication at that time.

Can clothing material impact subtle energy and how our physical and energetic body communicates with the outer world throughout the day?

Dr. Yellen claims that a Robert "Bob" Graham, a retired Texas A&M professor, created the "Ag-Environ" machine which analyzed frequencies of agricultural commodities to narrow down the optimal time for harvest, to treat plants, and determine when disease was present. She wrote, "The gentleman identified signature frequencies that identified illness also." The article is vague on what was tested during a public demonstration, but the inference is that they tested various plants to show difference in signature frequencies and somehow also demonstrated different frequencies of cloth. *GAIA Conceptions*, a North Carolina clothing company committed to customizable organic clothing, somehow determined, "The measurements were carried out in angstroms (m)."

Yellen claims that in a separate demonstration, she showed that placing a linen garment on top of another linen garment generated a higher frequency. Her belief is that the clothing one wears can either elevate one's frequency and gain health advantages from that, or that clothing can neutralize or degrade one's health.

Based on their findings, linen (made from flax) and wool are said to each have a frequency of 5,000 mHz. Also, supposedly, they identified the directionality of the materials' waves and claim that wool and linen waves travel in opposite directions and cancel each other out if worn at the same time. Thus, no health elevation from the materials when combined.

There is discrepancy across sites when it comes to the frequencies Yellen is said to have reported. One site says Yellen claims that non-organic cotton has a frequency of 70, while another says 40. One says polyester has a rating of 15, while another says it is zero along with nylon, spandex, lycra, bamboo, and acrylic. One site says silk has a frequency of 10 while another says it is 15.

Photo credit: mostlyaboutflax.blogspot.com, 2012

**Bundles of Flax, just after harvesting.**

Without clear access to research studies, a sample machine for current tests, or anyone else claiming they themselves have successfully proven frequency studies on cloth, the discrepancies remain a mystery and the frequencies skeptical. Yet, many feel there must be something energetically healing to fabrics because two particular fabrics—linen and wool—have been in the spotlight for ages as they appeared in scriptures within The Torah and Bible.

In The King James, Tynsdale, and *Third Millennium Bible* versions, Leviticus 19:19 lists a few specific examples for when the mixing of items is forbidden. The King James translation is as follows:

> [19] Ye shall keep my statutes. Thou shalt not let thy cattle gender with a diverse kind: thou shalt not sow thy field with mingled seed: *neither shall a garment mingled of linen and woolen come upon thee.*

In Deuteronomy, chapter 22:11, similar ideas are stated. From the American Standard Version:

> [9]Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with two kinds of seed, lest the whole fruit be forfeited, the seed which thou hast sown, and the increase of the vineyard. [10]Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together. [11]*Thou shalt not wear a mingled stuff, wool and linen together.*

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In both cases, the context appears that the Israelites are being told to avoid the practices which co-mingle different species. Still, English versions evolved over many translations and interpretations. Other Bibles don't mention wool nor linen for the same verses. Is there a closer, truer translation?

> **"Y**ou shall not wear sha'atnez, wool and linen together," is how Robert Alter translates Deuteronomy 22:11.

Alter is an American professor who formerly taught Hebrew and comparative literature at UC-Berkeley, in California. If we research the actual word used, "*sha'atnez"* —more information possibly compounds the mystery. Alter asserts the word is most likely an Egyptian derived term meaning "adulterated" or "false weave."

Religious clerics, theologians, and clothing salespeople have gone to great lengths to theorize why the God of the Israelites would say don't do it—regardless of if the interpretation is the wearing of the two fibers woven together or the wearing of an article of wool with an article of linen worn at the same time. The adherence was not a passing whim. There are still people who make their living determining whether clothing is entirely of one source or if it is sha'atnez.

## A FEW SCIENTISTS AND THEIR HYPOTHESES RELATED TO ENERGY FREQUENCY AND TEXTILE INFLUENCES.

- Theoretical physicist Albert Einstein (1879-1955) discovered the theory of relativity: everything is energy and as such is formed by wave frequencies or resonance frequencies. As a result, Al sums it up as "All matter has molecular vibration." Frequency is the rate of vibration, often measured in Hertz cycles per second.
- Maxwell's law was named after Physicist and mathematician James Clerk Maxwell (1831-1879): Where there is an electrical current there is a corresponding electromagnetic field.
- Dr. Albert Abrams (1863-1924) did studies on vibrational healing of fabrics along with other things. He created a Dynamopath machine which measured vibrations using hair or blood samples. He believed disease interfered with healthy electromagnetic fields and a machine could transmit healing vibrations back to the body.
- Engineer and inventor Nikola Tesla (1856-1943) believed by reducing external interfering frequencies, people could increase their natural immunity for defense, thus creating stronger, healthier states.
- Dr. Otto Warburg (1883-1970) established that there are electrical currents in cells. He won a Nobel prize for his work identifying the difference in respiration rate of cancer cells from healthy cells. (Heidi Yellen claims Warburg is the originator of identifying signature frequencies of a healthy average human between 70-90 (of some measure), but I couldn't confirm.)
- Dr. Royal Rife (1888-1971) is credited for identifying the frequency of a human's body between 62-72 Hz and that every disease had its own frequency of initiation. He believed a machine could beam electromagnetic waves of certain frequency to accelerate the vibration of diseased cells and cause their destruction. He named the rate the "mortal oscillatory rate."
- Dr. Robert O. Becker (1923-2008) confirmed the body has biological wave frequencies in all the organs; health state is determined by the state of these biological wave frequencies.
- Physicist Dr. David Hawkins (1927-2012) demonstrated different human emotions produce different energy fields and frequencies that may have a positive influence on a person's overall health.
- Dr. Phillip Callahan (1923-2017) researched flax with an oscilloscope and determined that linen attracts Tachyon energy. When placed on wounds, linen plus the attracted energy sped up healing. Yellen recorded that the oscilloscope, was "the instrument he [Callahan] used to determine energy of flax."
- D. Gary Young (1949-2018) and Bruce Tanio (1929-2011) developed a Calibrated Frequency Monitor to measure energy frequencies in MHz of essential oils at the molecular level. Their belief is these frequencies can be transferred (topically, through aromatherapy, or ingestion) to the human body, hence raising its frequency.

Various religious clerics and theologians have explored these scriptural prescriptions:

- To focus the Israelites on purity and oneness in daily physical practices, the practice of using only one seed, one cloth, one everything—would keep emphasizing one deity and purity.
- Another interpretation suggests that prior people (pagans) believed mixing seeds, animals, or textiles to be a "a source of magical power." As such, Israel's God would not want his people to have, nor to be involved with, magical power or using any pagan procedures.

Third, Heidi Yellen's article states: "In his Mishna Torah Sefer HaMizvot Commandments,

> Maimonides vol. 2, page 55, he commanded, 'Do not wear Shatanez for pagan priests, the Coptic Egyptians, wear linen and wool together." This suggests another need to set themselves apart from other clergy.

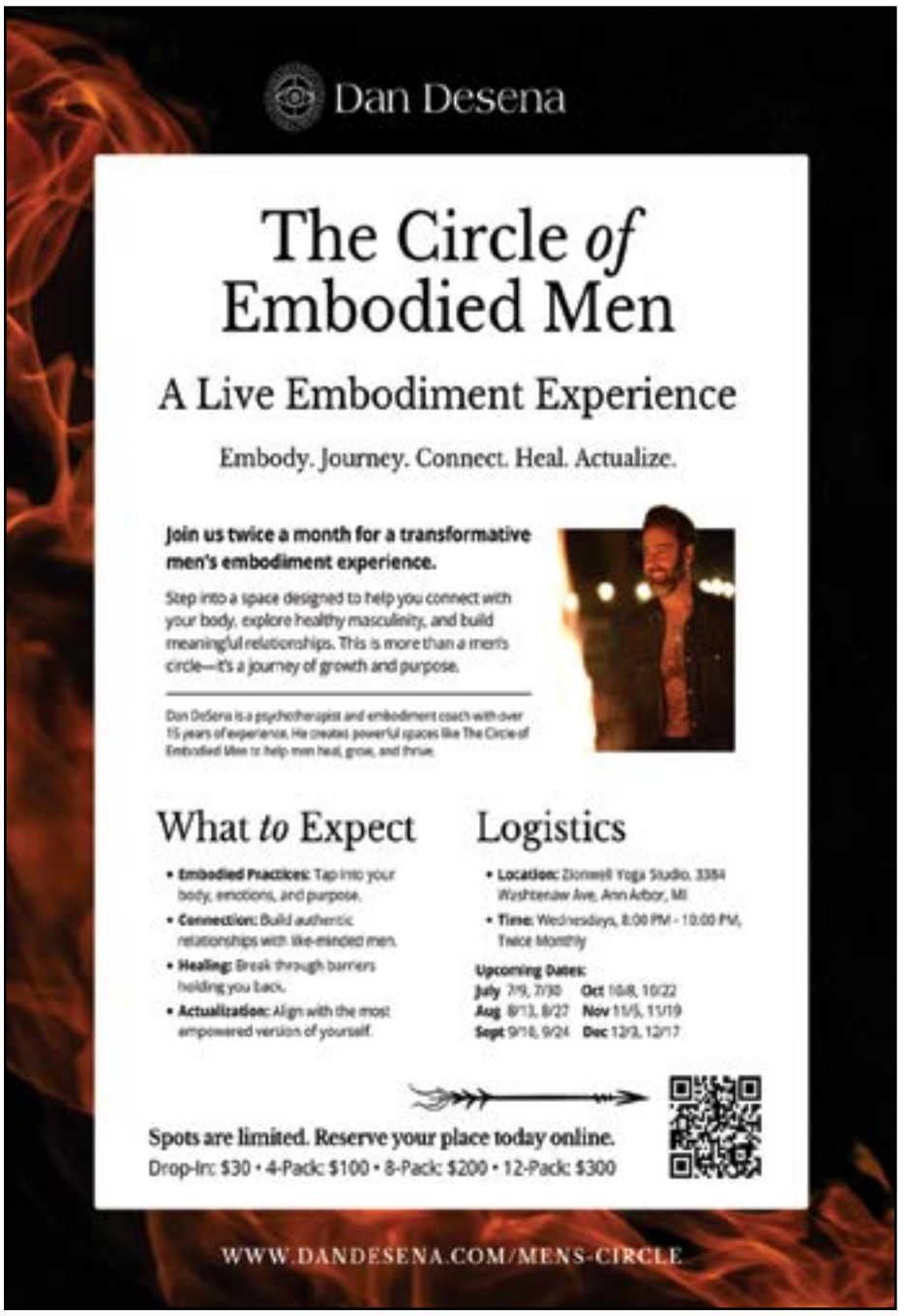
I am not a scholar of the *Torah* nor *Bible*, however, keeping to the chapter context, it's plausible that it comes down to purity and focus. However, the second and third reasons have been countered by several researchers and scholars. The September 7, 2022 "Philologos" column of *Mosaic* magazine notes that "proper Egyptians" did not engage in sheep herding, looked down on the occupation, and Egyptian priests were forbidden to wear wool clothing. *The Daily Life of Ancient Egyptians* (2008) outlines that Egyptian priests were "held to the highest standards of cleanliness because they came in contact

with the cult statue." They "wore nothing but pure white linen clothing." As a hypoallergenic material with antibacterial properties, high breathability, and odor resistance, linen would make sense to be the attire for priests. However, this rules out the theory that pagans (Egyptians with multiple deities) were wearing mixed cloth for magical power. If power was involved, certainly the Egyptian temple priests and rulers would have garnered as much as they could muster.

Conversely, saints and Sufi mystics, only wore 100% wool, per "Sufism" by Khwaja Shams-Ud-Deen Azeemi. Wool and other animal skins were the most common, and most easily available in Canaan and Mesopotamia. So, those weren't the pagan priests of concern.

Most perplexing though, is that despite these two verses pointed to by faithful and the clothing industry as indicating the two are bad or damaging together, there are whispers that Jewish rabbis and priests have worn the two materials simultaneously, even if not woven together. Yellen records them in the priests' linen "bod," the wool "techelet," a wool aramon, and a wool dyed Tolat Sheni. An avent (belt) was made from linene or a mixture of linen and wool—sha'atnez.

Lois Tverber of *Our Rabbi Jesus* notes that historical finds reveal the priest's white undergarment was linen while the over colored vestment was wool. The tassels (tzitzit) were commanded to be attached to the corners of garments in Numbers 15:38. The blue woolen cords were a mixture—were sha'atnez. Some were found in the Bar Kockba caves from early times as evidence. Tverberg suggests the command for all Jews to wear the cords was to remind every Israelite that they were to be a nation of priests (even though the "real" priests had more responsibility and authority.) The Jewish Virtual Library also reveals that "it was permitted for priests to wear garments of mixed textures prescribed by the Torah when performing priestly service. Also, that it was permissible to wrap a corpse made in sha'atnez shroud.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So…I have to say, it seems illogical for a deity to create something that would be damaging together and then simultaneously prohibit and prescribe its use by his people. There must be something else—either we are missing it, or we are trying to make it more mystical than needed.

Overall, it does appear that linen (flax fabric) has a historical use for facilitating healing, skin protection, and reducing static electricity. The silica fibers within flax inhibit bacterial growth, wicks away moisture, and minimizes odor. (Apparently, it was also the fabric of choice for preservation of Egyptian mummies.)

Wool is known for its insulation against cold, release of moisture, along with its anti-wrinkle, flame-retardant, hypoallergenic, and odor-resistant properties. Both are renewable resources and biodegradeable. Many in the textile industry would argue that these properties are what keeps them still a staple today and because they are from the earth, they must have more healthy properties than any synthetic blend created regardless of energy frequency.

Overall, it does appear that linen (flax fabric) has a historical use for facilitating healing, skin protection, and reducing static electricity. The silica fibers within flax inhibit bacterial growth, wicks away moisture, and minimizes odor. (Apparently, it was also the fabric of choice for preservation of Egyptian mummies.)

Still, I am reminded of two more science studies. In one, Dr. Bernard Grad of McGill University gave a population of rats goiters for an experiment and then divided them into control and experimental groups. He had energy healer Oskar Estebany infuse cotton and wool cloths with his energy intended to heal. The cloths were placed in the cages of experimental rats for one hour, morning and evening, six days a week. Those rats' goiters grew slower than the control group. Also, when the rats were allowed to return to normal non-goiter-causing diets, the experimental group's thyroids returned to normal quicker than the control group (Grad, et al., 1961). The experiment seemed to demonstrate successful transference of healing intention to tools. In context of this article's topic, I wonder if the study may have been influenced by the wool's high frequency? It would be interesting for someone to replicate the study with different cloths as the tools with and without infused healing energy.

A second study, however, speaks to what I think we all should remember: your beliefs, your focused intention, and convictions can manifest both ills and good in your world and for those around you despite what you choose to wear.

A second study, however, speaks to what I think we all should remember: your beliefs, your focused intention, and convictions can manifest both ills and good in your world and for those around you despite what you choose to wear.

In a study by Nash in 1984, subjects who held no claims to healing abilities were selected. Sixty volunteers were asked to simply set their intention to alter the genetics of bacteria Escherichia Coli in nine test tubes. Three tubes were set for attempts of increasing mutation from lactose negative to lactose positive, three for decreasing mutation, and three left as controls. The experiment resulted in the bacteria being influenced in the directions asked of the subjects.

Sure, color frequency has influence. Yes, food and words and vitamins (or the lack of) can influence us… possibly even clothing textiles. But, regardless of your spiritual reverence, even the average human body was designed with the ability to intentionally extend health or disease. Do you bless your food before partaking? Do you focus on positivity, trusting all will be well? Do you send love and prayers and support to people and situations you care about?

Choose your thoughts and beliefs wisely, not just your day's attire.

*Michelle McLemore is a freelance writer, speaker, energy practitioner, and stress management guide nearing publication of a childcare giver's guide for raising resilient, balanced youth. Learn more at facebook.com/MichelleMcLemoreHealingGuide, and michelle.mclemore on Instagram. Read more at mclemore.substack.com. Contact her directly at energy@michellemclemore.com.*

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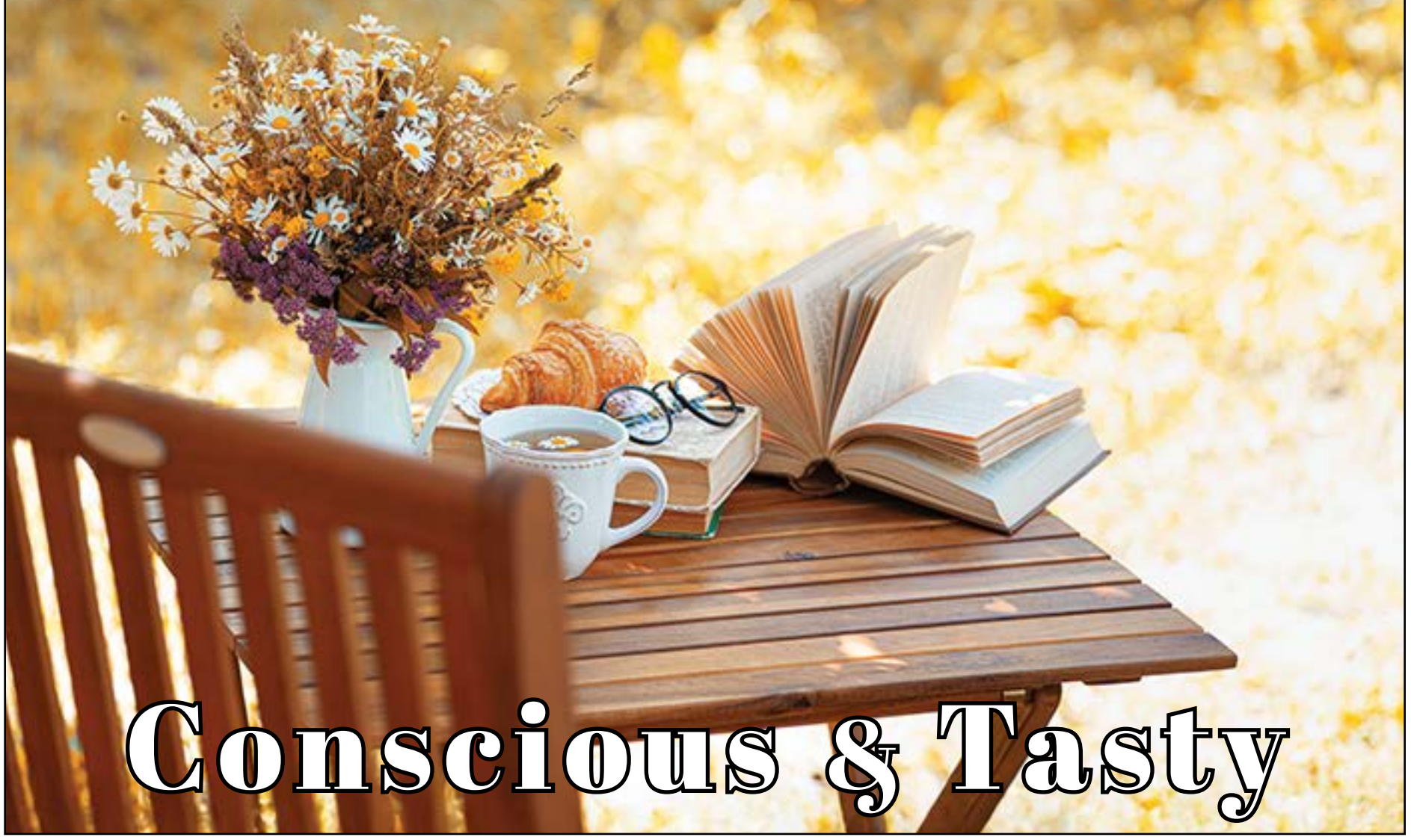

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# Cottage Food Businesses in Michigan: Creative Connections and Community

**Hundreds of home bakers sell their products at local venues, creating connections and offering diverse foods with a personal touch to their community.**

By Lisa Viger-Gotte

Suzanne Murray's love of all things French, combined with her partner Lisa Conlin's dream of running a small business, led to the creation of their deliciously delightful cottage food venture, La Baguette. Murray and Conlin have baked French-inspired treats in their Ann Arbor home kitchen since 2010, when former Governor Jennifer Granholm created Michigan's Cottage Food Law to help businesses like La Baguette operate with reduced regulatory barriers. They are familiar faces at local farmers markets and other events, where loyal customers have enjoyed their creations for years.

Suzanne Murray and Lisa Conlin

They're not alone. Hundreds of home bakers sell their products at local venues, creating connections and offering diverse foods with a personal touch to their community.

### What is Michigan's Cottage Food Law?

Michigan's Cottage Food Law allows small businesses to make and sell homemade foods from their home kitchens without cumbersome and expensive commercial licensing or inspections. Goodies like breads, jams, cookies, candies, granola, and more can be sold directly to consumers at farmers' markets, roadside stands, and fairs. It can be a wonderful way to connect with the community.

There are some restrictions. The maker must not prepare food that requires refrigeration and label each item to show it was made in a home kitchen not inspected by the State of Michigan. Additionally, revenue cannot exceed $25,000 per year, and all sales must be in person. Online and wholesale sales are currently not allowed. In late 2024, House Bill 6131 proposed increasing the Michigan Cottage Food Law gross sales cap from $25,000 to $45,000 and later $50,000. While this hasn't become law yet, it indicates continued growth and legislative interest in the cottage food sector.

Family inspired Shantal Hubbard, sells sourdough baked goods from her home in the country near Chelsea. "My youngest daughter and husband were both having some health issues that led me to learning about, and soon making, sourdough baked goods. Once I started, I soon realized how wonderful, delicious, and healthy homemade sourdough baked goods were." Shantal soon started making enough to share with her extended family, friends, and then customers.

Look What I Made is the decorated cookie business run by Jessica Rickli from her home in Chelsea. Like many other home bakers, she uses social media to connect with her customers and let the community know what she has to offer. "I use Facebook to market to my clientele. I post pictures of all my orders and advertise my popup sales and website on there. I have also been able to sell my products at popups during our city's street music festival that runs weekly during the summer."

Word of mouth can be a great way to connect as well. Murray and Conlin appreciate the face-to-face interaction of farmers' markets. "We've been very fortunate to have interacted with many friendly customers over the years. Getting to know our customers has been the highlight of owning a cottage food business since it requires that we sell directly to people. Responding to what our customers like is the most effective marketing for us. We also use the fact that we are selling at a farmers' market and incorporate other vendors' products and seasonal influences to appeal to customers. The French cachet adds an effective touch as does our enjoyment of repartee."

Running a small business isn't all cookies and baguettes though. There can be challenges as well. Murray and Conlin have weekly meetings to stay on top of what needs to be done. "We aren't working with commercial-sized equipment, which means we can only bake a limited quantity at one time. We have to pace ourselves and stay organized to maintain control of our inventory and to be ready to arrive at the markets on time. Seeking ingredients and other necessities weekly from a variety of sources is a priority so that we never run out of any essential ingredients."

Shantal Hubbard has also had challenges working in a smaller home kitchen. "One challenge I've encountered is how much I can produce on a bake day. I'm operating out of my home kitchen on an extremely part-time basis. The best way I have managed this is to limit the amount of orders I take per week so that I am able to fulfill all of them and produce high-quality sourdough baked goods."

Jessica Rickli said, "Do your research first, and then if it still sounds like a good fit for you, do it! The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) has the information you need posted online, as well at online classes they offer. Also look into what 'competitors' there are in your area—sometimes you need to be the only one in your niche to be successful, and other times it can be beneficial to have a few businesses like yours around. I find what I am doing to be fun, beneficial, and rewarding, and I wish the same for all others interested in this path as well."

Jessica Rickli

Hubbard suggests doing what you love and use yourself. "Find something you enjoy and are already using or making for yourself or family. I would also recommend not putting too much pressure on yourself! You can take it as quickly or as slowly as you want and can grow at your own pace."

**Cottage food may be sold only in person, directly from farmers markets, roadside stands, fairs, and from home. You may take orders online or by phone, but the final exchange must be face-to-face.**

## How to Start Your Own Cottage Food Business

Do you love to bake, create, and engage with your community? Developing a Cottage Food Business might be for you! Here's an overview of what you need to know to get started.

**Michigan's Cottage Food Law allows small businesses to make and sell home-made foods from their home kitchens without cumbersome and expensive commercial licensing or inspections. Goodies like breads, jams, cookies, candies, granola, and more can be sold directly to consumers at farmers' markets, roadside stands, and fairs.**

**1. Understand the Cottage Food Law**
Michigan's Cottage Food Law (PA 113 of 2010) allows individuals to prepare and sell non-potentially hazardous foods, such as baked goods, dry mixes, jams, candies, dried herbs, popcorn, and roasted coffee. These can be made in your primary home kitchen without a food license or inspection. However, foods requiring refrigeration or with alcohol are prohibited. Annual gross sales are capped at $25,000 per household.

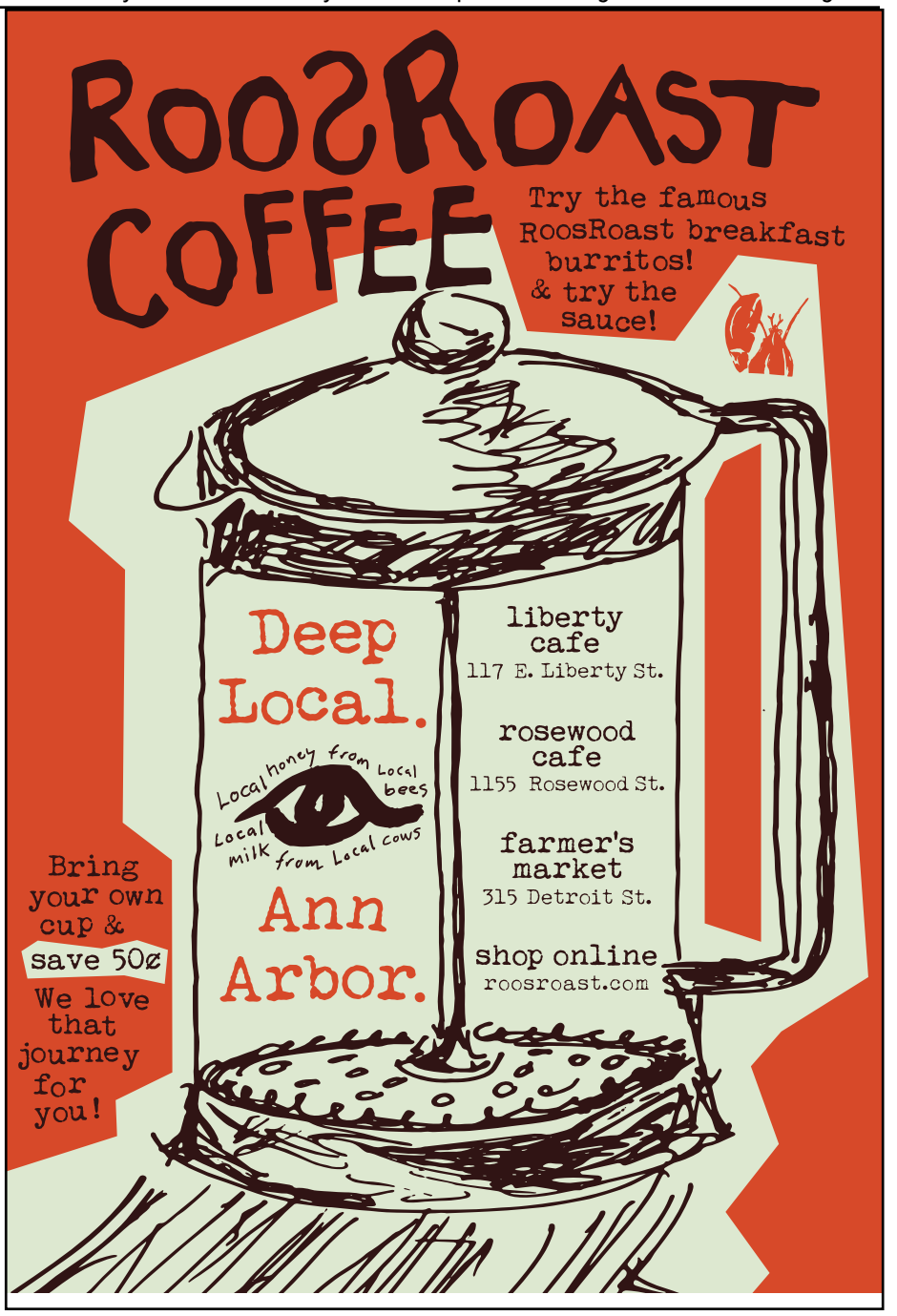
**2. Choose Eligible Products**
Select foods that are shelf-stable at room temperature and fall within allowed categories such as breads, granola, candies, jams, dried fruits, nut butters, and roasted coffee. Do not include restricted items like salsas, meat, cut melon or fruit, refrigerated items, or alcohol-infused confections.

**3. Confirm Local Regulations and Business Setup**
Although MDARD doesn't require permits or licensing, it's critical to review the Michigan Food Law and Food Code for definitions, adulteration, and packaging rules. Contact your city or county to check for local zoning, business licensing, or DBA requirements. Decide on your business structure (e.g., sole proprietorship, LLC) and tax obligations.

Shantal Hubbard and Her Family

**4. Prepare Your Kitchen**
Your kitchen should be clean, hygienic, and free from pets, pests, and chemicals. Follow these safety steps to keep you and your customers safe. Sanitize countertops, utensils, and equipment, and use clean attire, including aprons, hair nets, and gloves. Prevent cross-contamination by using separate equipment for different foods and avoid preparing food while ill. Designate storage areas within your residence. Garages, sheds, or outbuildings are not allowed.

**5. Complete Food Safety Training**
Michigan State University Extension provides a free online course on Cottage Food Law Food Safety, covering production, packaging, transport, sampling, and recordkeeping. Although the course is optional, completing this builds consumer confidence and improves food safety by ensuring sellers adhere to safe food handling practices.




**6. Package and Label Products Correctly**
All cottage food must be prepackaged and labeled. Required label information includes business name and physical street address (no PO boxes) and product name. Complete ingredient list descending by weight, including sub-ingredients and net weight or volume plus metric equivalent. List common allergens like milk, eggs, nuts, soy, wheat, and fish. All products must be labeled with the mandatory statement: "Made in a home kitchen that has not been inspected by the Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development." This must be in at least 11-point font and legible. If you're selling items like wedding cakes that aren't prepackaged, include required info on an invoice or box documentation.

**7. Plan Sales Venues and Keep Records**
Cottage food may be sold only in person, directly from farmers markets, roadside stands, fairs, and from home. You may take orders online or by phone, but the final exchange must be face-to-face. Mailing, shipping, consignment, wholesaling, retail sales, and third-party selling are prohibited. Be prepared to track sales, ingredient sourcing, and inventory. MDARD may request records, especially if sales approach the $25K cap.

**8. Launch, Promote & Maintain Compliance**
Market via your website, social media, and local events. Emphasize your homegrown, safe-food story. Customers appreciate transparency. Keep your kitchen and transportation clean during events. Annually review business status, and if sales exceed $25,000, you must shift to a licensed commercial kitchen.

By understanding the law, selecting the right products, ensuring safe home production, labeling correctly, selling directly, and maintaining records, you can legally and successfully start a cottage food business in Michigan. If you need help along the way, contact MDARD at 800-292-3939 or MDA-Info@michigan.gov.

*Visit La Baguette's website at labaguettea2.com. Look What I Made and Shantal Hubbard can be found on Facebook @lookewhatImadellc and @shantalhubbard. For more information on starting your own cottage food business visit michiganfoodsafety.com, mifma.org, or michigan.gov/mdard.*

# Cooking with Lisa

By Lisa Viger-Gotte

## Maple Roasted Delicata Squash Salad

Delicata squash is a small, oblong winter squash with pale-yellow skin and green stripes. Its sweet, nutty flavor is similar to sweet potato or corn, and its thin skin becomes tender when roasted, so no peeling is needed. It's typically in season from late summer through early winter.

Delicata squash is perfectly roasted with a touch of maple syrup until caramelized and golden. Serve it on a bed of peppery arugula tossed with toasted pecans, tart dried cranberries, and red onion slivers. Add a simple maple-mustard vinaigrette and this cozy fall salad is as beautiful as it is delicious—perfect for a holiday, a light autumn lunch, or a delicious side at dinner.

**Ingredients:**

For the salad:

1 medium delicata squash, halved, seeded, and sliced into half moons

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 tablespoon pure maple syrup

Salt and black pepper, to taste

4 cups arugula (or mixed greens)

1/3 cup dried cranberries (and/or fresh pomegranate seeds)

1/3 cup toasted pecans (or walnuts)

1/4 small red onion, thinly sliced

For the dressing:

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar

2 tablespoons maple syrup

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

Pinch of salt and pepper

**Instructions**

Roast the squash: Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C). Toss the delicata squash slices with olive oil, maple syrup, salt, and pepper. Spread on a parchment-lined baking sheet and roast for 20–25 minutes, flipping halfway, until tender and golden brown.

Make the dressing: In a small bowl or jar, whisk together the olive oil, apple cider vinegar, maple syrup, Dijon mustard, and a pinch of salt and pepper until smooth and emulsified.

Assemble the salad:In a large bowl or serving platter, layer the arugula, roasted squash, cranberries, red onion, and pecans. Drizzle with the maple vinaigrette and toss gently just before serving.

Can't find delicata? Try these substitutes:

- Butternut squash (peeled and sliced) is sweet and creamy.
- Acorn squash (roasted in wedges) is mild and earthy.
- Kabocha squash has a rich, dense, and deeply flavorful.
- These swaps will still give you that cozy, roasted fall flavor: adjust cook times slightly for thicker-skinned varieties.

## Kale and White Bean Stew

This rustic stew is warming, nourishing, and full of flavor. Tender white beans simmer with garlic, onion, and tomatoes, then get a nutritional boost from fresh kale and a splash of lemon. It's easy to make, is comforting, and loaded with fiber, plant-based protein, and cozy vibes. Serve it with crusty bread or vegan cornbread for the perfect one-bowl meal.

Kale brings the greens: it's loaded with vitamins A, C, and K, plus calcium and powerful phytonutrients that support inflammation reduction and immune function.

**Ingredients:**

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 small yellow onion, diced

3 cloves garlic, minced

2 medium carrots, sliced

2 celery stalks, sliced

1/2 teaspoon dried thyme

1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika (optional for depth)

1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional, for some heat)

1 (14 oz) can diced tomatoes with juice

3 cups vegetable broth

2 (15 oz) cans white beans (cannellini or great northern), drained and rinsed

1 small bunch kale, stems removed and leaves chopped

1 tablespoon of lemon juice (plus zest, optional)

Salt and pepper, to taste

**Instructions**

Sauté the base veggies: In a large soup pot, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the onion, carrots, and celery. Cook for 6–8 minutes, until softened.

Stir in the garlic, thyme, smoked paprika, and red pepper flakes. Cook for another minute until fragrant.

Add the diced tomatoes (with juice), broth, and white beans. Bring to a simmer and cook uncovered for 10–15 minutes allowing the flavors to meld and the stew to thicken slightly.

Stir in the chopped kale and cook for another 5–7 minutes until the kale wilts and becomes tender.

Add lemon juice and season with salt and pepper to taste. For extra brightness, add a bit of lemon zest before serving.

Serve warm, topped with fresh parsley or a drizzle of olive oil if desired. Pair with crusty bread, garlic toast, or vegan cornbread.

Why pair beans and kale? Because together, they create a nutritional powerhouse that supports energy, immunity, and longevity.

Beans are rich in plant-based protein, complex carbs, and fiber—great for digestion, heart health, and sustained energy. They're also packed with iron, folate, magnesium, and antioxidants.

# *Yaupon Tea*

Peggy A. Alaniz

Have you ever wondered if there is one type of tea that is unique to the North American continent? I have sought the answer to this question a long time.

Most continents have their own unique tea blends. Maté is typical to South America and Rooibose to South Africa. True tea, or camellia sinus, can be found all over Asia. For the longest time, I could not believe there was not a plant or herb that was unique to the North American continent that could be considered tea. Then, I discovered Yaupon tea while on vacation in Florida.

Yaupon tea is tea made from the leaves of the Yaupon Holly plant. While the berries of the plant are toxic to humans, the leaves can be harvested and brewed into tea. It had originally been consumed by the Native American tribes of the Southeastern United States and Mexico. The leaves have a high caffeine content similar to South American maté. The pleasant thing about Yaupon tea is that it is lower in tannins and therefore less bitter than traditional tea.

Yaupon has several health benefits attributed to it. Like traditional tea from the camellia sinuses plant, Yaupon is rich in antioxidants, flavonoids, and polyphenols—which means that it can help protect cells from free radical damage. It is anti-inflammatory, so it helps to reduce swelling and pain. It has been known to lower blood pressure and improve cognitive function. Drinking Yaupon tea has been attributed to improved cortisol levels, lower stress, and weight loss. The most important thing about Yaupon tea is that it has a pleasant taste. Since Yaupon tea is herbal, it can also steep longer, and for multiple times, without becoming bitter.

I prefer the green Yaupon tea to the more traditional black (which is made by burning the leaves to give it a similar taste profile to maté tea). Overall, it provides a pleasant pick me-up without a crash or any jitters which can come from too much caffeine. Since it has a flavor similar to traditional tea, it can be combined with other ingredients to create your own unique blends. Yaupon can be purchased commercially, or you can grow your own small dwarf plant in a pot. It is best to harvest the leaves while they are young. Take no more than a third of the leaves so that the plant can continue to grow and thrive for years to come.

Since Yaupon is so energizing, it is the perfect tea to add to your morning routine or incorporate into a smoothie.

**Yaupon Blueberry Smoothie**

Ingredients:

1 cup of chilled Yaupon tea

¼ cup of plain Greek yogurt

3 pitted dates or prunes

1 ½ cups of frozen blueberries

1 tablespoon of chia seeds

½ tablespoon of flax seeds

Bring one cup of water to a boil, and place your Yaupon leaves in a caddy or one pouch in the water. Allow to chill until cool. Then strain. The tea needs to be cool or cold for the smoothie. In a blender, combine the chilled Yaupon tea, Greek yogurt, either three pitted dates for a sweeter smoothie or three prunes for a tarter drink, frozen blueberries, chia seeds, and flax seeds. Blend until all the ingredients are combined, usually one to two minutes. Drink and enjoy.

*P. A. Alaniz has an MA in Writing & Poetics from Naropa University in Boulder, CO. She has been published in* My Wonderful, Wacky Family*, an edition of* Chicken Soup for the Soul, *and writes a poetry travel blog called Tea, Travel, and Spirits.*

# The Buzz on Protecting Pollinators Through the Winter

Story and Illustrations by Karen Quinn

During the spring and summer there is always a lot of buzz around pollinators, their habitats, and how to support them. But did you know you can continue to support your backyard friends in the fall and winter as well? Through a few simple steps you can continue to provide for your local pollinators as the weather turns cold. By offering them housing during the snowy winter months you can guarantee they'll return to your gardens the following year. It's a win for everyone!

**During the spring and summer there is always a lot of buzz around pollinators, their habitats, and how to support them. But did you know you can continue to support your backyard friends in the fall and winter as well?**

Our pollinating insects in southern Michigan are solitary bees, butterflies, moths, and flies. Many of the bees and flies prefer to either hibernate underground or in hollowed out stems. Butterflies, moths, and a few bee species prefer to overwinter in leaf piles. Other bugs, such as lightning bugs and beneficial garden spiders, prefer compressed stacks of sticks and logs. Many frogs and toads prefer leaves and stick piles as well, using the protective pocket of decomposing foliage to keep the soil above them warmer as they burrow into the earth to hibernate.

**Most of our fall yard clean-up is detrimental to our garden buddies. Activities like pulling up annual flowers, cutting back stalks, pre-winter rototilling, and excessive leaf clean up leave your yard a pollinator wasteland.**

How can you achieve these overwinter habitats? The simplest way is to "do less" in the fall. Most of our fall yard clean-up is detrimental to our garden buddies. Activities like pulling up annual flowers, cutting back stalks, pre-winter rototilling, and excessive leaf clean up leave your yard a pollinator wasteland. Letting your flower stalks and seed pods stand offers winter habitat for the critters that prefer to overwinter in stems, as well as food for non-migratory birds. This method also adds winter intrigue in your garden. A bright red cardinal picking at the tall, top-tufted coneflower stems glittering in ice bring a quiet beauty to winter gardens.

You should avoid tilling your garden beds at the end of the season for multiple reasons. First, a large portion of our pollinators burrow just six inches into the soil, nearest to where they found food that year. When you till, you could accidentally unearth your little friends, and in most cases kill them. Another reason to avoid autumn tilling is to protect your topsoil. When you turn the soil before the harsh winter months, you expose the microbes that make the soil healthy to the wind and cold, thus making your soil less nutritious, and in return making your garden less successful. Fall tilling is a lose-lose, for sure. Instead of removing pollinators and soil health, add even more habitat and nutrition to your gardens with leaves! Adding two to three inches of leaves to your beds offers habitat to even more of your insect buddies as well as adding more nutrition to your soil through natural leaf decomposition.

Another more involved, and honestly more fun, way to help your pollinators is to create a Pollinator Habitat, otherwise called a Bee House. In addition to the suggestions above, I add these houses to all my various garden beds in the fall to encourage pollinators to stay close and help me out next year. The easiest way to make one is to gather pinecones, bark, small twigs, leaves and straw, and stack them inside a small wooden box. Then I use a few staples and secure ¼ inch hardware mesh to the opening so the materials can't fall out or get pulled out by a critter for nesting materials or a winter smorgasbord. Take care to orient the opening to face southeast, to catch the morning sun, but avoid deep shade, when possible, to deter predatory wasps. Then, when the overnight temperatures consistently dip below 35 degrees, I move the boxes into our unheated garage to provide protection though the cold months. You want their storage temperature to stay between 35 degrees to 39 degrees. When spring returns, and the overnight temperature is consistently above 35 degrees (in our area that can be anywhere from late February to early May!), I put the boxes back out in the gardens in the same orientation as they were before I stored them (facing southeast). Once I see my pollinator friends out and about in the yard, I remove the staples, empty the box's contents, and store the houses until the following fall.

**Different pollinators have a variety of overwintering needs. Be sure to provide different nesting options to suit their requirements.**

My bee houses are crude, but they're super effective and more than get the job done. But if you want to make a prettier version, the sky is the limit! There are a few guidelines to help make sure there's no vacancy in your hotel over the winter. First, don't make your bee house too big. A huge structure might sound fun, and be neat to look at, but remember that you will need to fill it with materials, move it in and out of storage, and then turn those materials over once a year. Only bite off as much as you want to chew! Second, choose a space to locate your box so that it is protected from wind, rain, and other critters. Keep in mind that insects are food for a lot of other animals. It would be a shame to have your little habitat turn into a bird buffet, or see it cleaned out by a critter for nesting supplies, just before wintertime. Lastly, if you decide you want to paint your hotel, avoid toxic paint, and only paint the outside.

Finally, different pollinators have a variety of overwintering needs. Be sure to provide different nesting options to suit their requirements. As mentioned above, pinecones, bark, sticks, leaves, and straw are my "go-to" options, but that is

because they're all readily available to me. If you need to procure materials, here are some helpful guidelines.

Hole-nesting bees need small openings to make their hibernations successful. These are the bees that normally use stems to overwinter in. Cattail reeds, coneflower stems, and lake reeds such as horsetail ferns, are the best options found in nature. If you decide to purchase straws, be sure they are made of cardboard and avoid bamboo and plastic straws, as they retain moisture, which causes problems during development. The straw's openings should range somewhere between 4 mm and 10 mm in size and be at least 6 inches long. This will ensure that the bees have the space they need to grow and develop. If you are struggling to procure this type of material, you can always drill a succession of holes into a block of wood or a log, varying the sizes from 4 mm up to 10 mm. Just remember to drill them as deep as possible.

**Another more involved, and honestly more fun, way to help your pollinators is to create a Pollinator Habitat, otherwise called a Bee House.**

My final suggestion is to make leaf mould. This is a great way to overwinter a lot of pollinators, as well as use some of nature's abundance to your advantage. To make leaf mould, choose a small, shady spot in your yard that has good ventilation. Lay a piece of clean, non-inked cardboard down to suppress weed growth and simply load it up as tall as you can with leaves in the fall and let it sit until next autumn. But a word of warning, not all leaves are good for certain plants. Avoid using black walnut leaves if you plan to use the mould in gardens where you grow vegetables. Black walnut leaves contain juglone, and it will kill your solanaceae (tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, potatoes, etc.) Oak and beech will break down the fastest, while conifer needles will take the longest. I have a lot of maple leaves, and they break down in about a year. You'll know when your mould is ready when it slightly resembles soil consistency. Once it's finished you can add it to your gardens at any time. I suggest adding it to your gardens in the fall, then put an additional two inches of that season's fallen leaves on top, and voilà! You have a lovely little ecosystem that will feed your perennial plants through the winter.

For more information on protecting and attracting pollinators you can visit these online resources:

Almanac.com/more-ways-use-fall-leaves-garden

Almanac.com/bee-houses-native-solitary-bees

Almanac.com/native-bees0best-pollinatos-your-garden

Almanac.com/building-pollinator-garden

Almanac.com/10-fall-cleanup-tips-better-spring-garden

*Karen Quinn is a writer and artist who homesteads on a rural urban farm in Livonia, Michigan with her husband, son, and menagerie of animals. Her favorite things are reading, exploring, and drinking tea.*

# Readers at Crazy Wisdom Bookstore Monthly Schedule

**Mari Ziolkowski (Sparkle Goddess)**
Thursdays, 2:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
1 Question 2-Card Reading 10 Minutes $20
Otherwise $2/minute 30 Minute Minimum

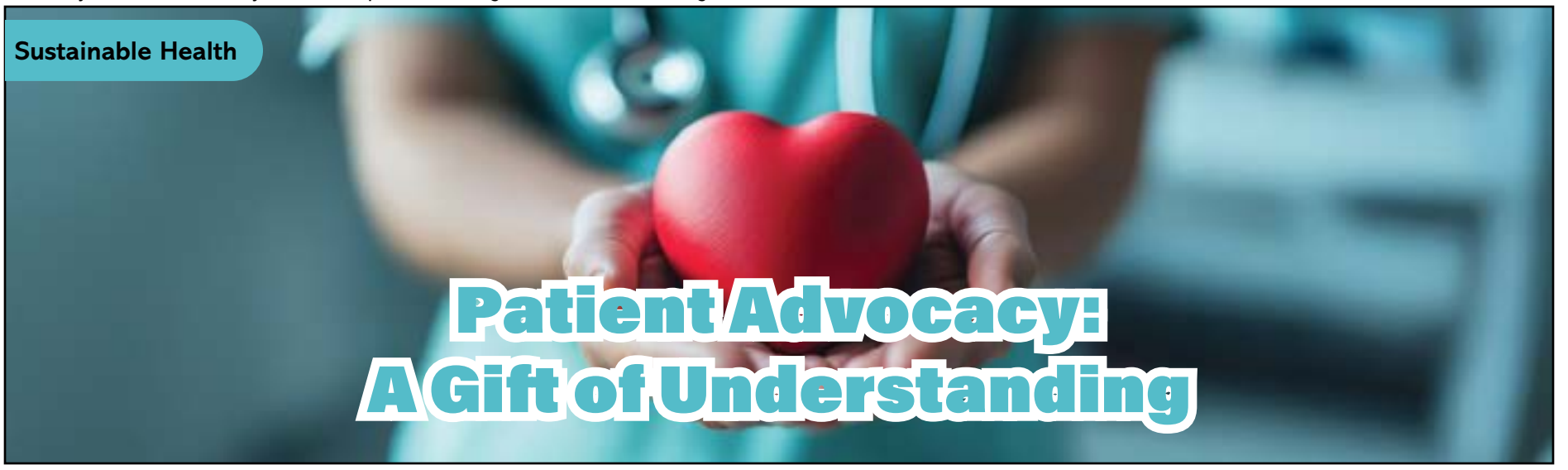
**Intuitive Card Reader Nina McDermott**
Fridays, 2:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Saturdays, 3:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
3 - card Simple Spread $20
5 - card Deeper Look Spread $45
9 - card Greater Perspective Spread $65

**Tarot Reader Deborah Cherrin**
1st 3 Saturdays, 11:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
1st 3 Sundays, 12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
$2/minute, 15-minute minimum

**Intuitive Reader Marcella Fox**
The last full weekend of every month
Saturday and Sunday 12:00 p.m. -3:00 p.m.
$20 for first 15 min. $1 per min additional

**Crazy Wisdom Bookstore**
**114 S. Main St., Ann Arbor**
**734.665.2757**
**crazywisdombookstore.com**

**Please call to confirm reader is in before coming in for a reading**



Sustainable Health

# Patient Advocacy: A Gift of Understanding

By Lisa Wolfe

*Editor's note: Lisa Wolfe is a woman of many journeys. She has lived and worked in Michigan, New Mexico, Southern Texas, and Alaska with First Nation and Hispanic families in maternal-child health as a midwife and educator. For nearly 50 years, she worked as a patient advocate alongside her work as an RN. Her maternal grandparents, immigrants from Denmark, worked in health care through nursing and massage therapy. They, in turn, came from a long and rich lineage of medical, nursing, and massage practitioners. She learned about culture, the role of family, and the importance of a holistic approach to living and health care, beginning with them. She has used the qualities of patient advocacy in the education and care of nursing students, medical students, and residents when she was employed in the medical and nursing health care and education systems. She believes that patient advocacy is a key to satisfactory health care—for patients as well as for the providers and health care workers. She currently lives in Lake Ann.*

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*An 85-year-old man was discharged from the emergency room observation area at 2:15 a.m. He had no indication that this was going to take place as his health issue was not resolved. He had no cell phone, couldn't walk without his walker, and no one to pick him up from the hospital, yet he was wheeled out to sit at the hospital entrance and wait for a county transport to pick him up at 6:00 a.m.*

*Another patient refused surgery because he was afraid of the invasiveness with a kidney diagnosis received just minutes before. The surgeon got upset with the patient in front of the health care team. The patient was alone and needed to discuss things with his family. Once that conversation happened, the patient asked the nurse to talk with the surgeon about his decision. The surgeon informed the nurse that he was no longer available to perform the surgery.*

**Patient Advocacy can help us understand our health care system and our involvement in it. As patients, we can help providers understand that we are eager to be informed.**

Health care can bring about personal aspects of fear for both the patient and the provider. The provider is taught the role of authority; the patient is often taught to be obedient. This can lead to over-entitlement and disempowerment within the health care relationship. By communicating your needs, you are teaching your health care team to respect the system and yourself. You are the expert in your experience and body. Your provider is an expert in science of the body.

The fundamental principles of "safety, security, and trust" is the foundation of good health care. As a patient, we want our providers to give us their time and attention—to treat us as they would like to be treated. A satisfying relationship produces growth and trust. Ask your provider to help you understand your care. If you can't advocate for yourself, make sure you have someone who can speak up and take notes for you.

Personal empowerment can help inform our health care experience. Think about the possibility of the partnership with your health care team in a way that has meaning for you. Patient Advocacy can help us understand our health care system and our involvement in it. As patients, we can help providers understand that we are eager to be informed.

Fundamental to patient advocacy is the model of holistic care which involves a dynamic relationship between our mind, body, and spirit, including cultural norms and values, and justice-oriented principles. Integrated within physical care, we can use practices from our personal life including meditation, visualization, or other healing tools as we prepare for appointments and procedures. Informed communication is the opening from which everything else follows.

**The fundamental principles of "safety, security, and trust" is the foundation of good health care.**

*An elderly woman needed a nursing home urgently. It took two weeks and a search of 19 different nursing homes in the area with a moderate sized population. She went to a nursing home that had a two-star rating because there was no other choice. At this nursing home there was an inappropriate event at night with an orderly. When the elder's daughter found out, the event was directly reported to state authorities. All of the staff involved were immediately let go, and a new administrator was assigned to work through some of the problems. The director of nursing remained and was "chilly" to the resident and her daughter in all subsequent situations.*

- Be a "problem patient" if you must. Know your team and become involved in meetings, even if this is "inconvenient" for the staff. Show up. Be involved. Ask questions. Know unit managers if needed. Establish relationships. Who are the consultants and why are they involved? Get to know your floor managers. Ask to meet them. This is your ticket to involvement.
- Get a second opinion if you need to. Change providers if you have different values than your current one. Know who is in your room and why. Help your providers know what your priorities are. Speak up. Communicate when you have a personal issue such as being afraid of anesthesia or wanting a certain person to review your consent form with you.
- Providers are trained in the science of physiology, chemical applications of medications, and the physical body. They are rarely, if ever, taught about relationships and emotional situations. Medications, diagnostic studies, and regulations control most of the care that is given in hospitals whose specialty is to serve people in acute conditions.
- The provider's environment is stressful. They are often overworked and are responsible for all aspects of patient care. Nurses, social workers, physical therapists, nutritionists, chaplains, home care consultants, pharmacy and pain control consultants, medical assistants, receptionists, and behavioral health providers are all contending with their own mandates and stressors.
- Your room influences many aspects of your treatment, health, and well-being.

It's your only private place. Sometimes your provider has a person taking notes or helps them with tools for a procedure. This person serves as a witness for the provider. Know the name and role of this person. Your hospital room might have monitors and other equipment with an array of sounds There are many types of potential disruptions: lights on at night, hallway noise, the use of the bathroom, periodic treatments and use of devices, the location of your belongings and whether or not they are labeled, people you don't know in your room, and daily routines (are you the last person for a shower, medication or meal pass?). Do you need to negotiate the television with a roommate? What about phone and computer use and your rest needs? Consider if you need an eye mask, ear plugs, or headphones. Do you need time outside in nature? All these things can influence your care, comfort, and healing.

- Be informed. Know about the cost of your care. You may have to research this with the billing office and insurance company. Consider the extent of your government entitlements and insurance coverage including providers who are "out of contract," and additional charges such as physicians who read diagnostic studies, labs, screenings, and consultants.

*A woman told her doctor that she did not want to take a certain medication because she had an allergy to it. The doctor gave it to her anyway and she had a cardiac arrest. This adverse reaction was not documented in the patient's record. Her family met with the patient advocate of the hospital who was sincere but didn't follow up with a phone call or letter. Both were promised.*

- Get a copy of your hospital or facility Code of Conduct and the State Ombudsman's (a public official appointed by the state legislature to receive and investigate complaints against the administrative acts of government agencies) name and contact information. You have a right to your medical record with a choice between a hard copy or online version.
- Know your rights. Look over The Patient Self-Determination Act (PSDA) and the right of self-determination, as guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and the patient rights documents of your hospital, nursing home, or other health care system.
- Double check consents and other paperwork. Is your procedure on the correct body part? Is the biopsy in the proper area? Make sure you understand all of the information on your consent forms fully before signing them. This is your only protection if there is a mishap.

- Talk to your family. Ask how they feel about the decisions that are being made. Take some time before signing anything. Be sure you know what is being done and why.
- Medications are a pivotal treatment consideration for the hospital and insurance companies. Know your medications—what you are taking and why. You can refuse medications, unless it's a life and death situation and you don't have your end-of-life paperwork in order. Bring your allergy list including your reactions with you to your provider appointments to help your provider determine with you the best choice of medications.

**With the courage to speak up and take responsibility for our own health care, we can shift from disempowerment to empowerment, from partial involvement to satisfaction.**

- Work with your discharge planning people for setting up follow up appointments, including home care, before leaving the hospital or facility. What are your transportation and home care needs? Be sure you have an understanding of the timing of discharge and your preparation essentials. Make sure you have an advocate "on call" to help you if discharge comes up suddenly.
- If it is important to you, consider asking surgical team about music, prayer, who is doing the actual surgery, and other aspects of care in the surgical suite while you are under anesthesia.
- Think about your privacy needs such as special visits of chaplain or family. Ask for a "Do Not Disturb" sign on your door during meditation or other quiet times.
- Think about your hygiene, including your nails and hair. Your independence is a valuable aspect of your healing even if your staff are busy. Communicate a plan with them. How is your equipment working for you, including for showering and transferring. How is the ease of use of appliances and tools for eating, hearing, and seeing? Consider senses of smell and sensation-related support you need.

**The provider is taught the role of authority; the patient is often taught to be obedient. This can lead to over-entitlement and disempowerment within the health care relationship.**

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*An elderly woman was discharged before she had her diagnostic study results, and inpatient referrals were still pending. She had no discharge planning done even though she lived alone, without transportation or assistance with her treatments which had not been explained to her. The hospital told her she was to be discharged because they needed the bed to be open for a future admission.*

We are the leader of our team. Our provider relationship can flourish when we assume good intent and a shared investment, learning from each other. With the courage to speak up and take responsibility for our own health care, we can shift from disempowerment to empowerment, from partial involvement to satisfaction. It can be rewarding. Take the time. Have an advocate. Be an advocate.

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*Lisa Wolfe, RN, MSN, CNM; Dipl PSH, Dipl IC is a Certified Nurse Midwife and Registered Nurse with focus on cultural and psychiatric health, holism, and education. She is a Pure Spiritual Healer, Intuitive Counselor and Coach, and Animal Healer. She is also a Sevalight Associate. For more information about her practice and classes visit LisaWolfeHolisticCare.com.*

YOGA COLUMN

# Namaste, Katie...

**Whether you're a seasoned yogi or getting ready to roll out your mat for the first time, here you'll find a variety of useful tips from local yoga instructor, Katie Hoener.**

**Namaste Katie,**

**In a recent class my teacher was going through the Yamas and the Niyamas. I love learning these foundational aspects of yoga and was wondering if you could tell me your take on truthfulness. My partner was reflecting that it means to never tell a lie, and that was not what I gathered from the practice.**

**With light,**
**Darren, Ann Arbor**

Namaste Darren,

I also adore leading, or more often being led by, these foundational elements of yoga. *This is That: Patanjali's Yoga Sutras Padas 1 and 2* by Anand Mehrotra, gets right to the heart of your question when he writes "… it is very dangerous to translate it merely as "Thou shall speak the truth and only the truth.""
He goes on to explain that all of our truths are subjective, based our own experiences, and not based on any universal or unbiased truth. He extrapolates that if we are in conflict, our truth is filtered through the lens of that conflict.

With that perspective, and a reminder that all truths while in this human experience are perceived uniquely by each of us, how do we handle your question of speaking our truth? The reflections within the Yoga Sutras ask us to reflect on whether a truth is unchanging before we consider it to be one of these universal truths that we try our best not to modify. Much of what yoga describes in truthfulness is wrapped up in the concept of absoluteness.

While this conversation does get quite philosophical, it ties into the yogic belief that we all share a universal essence that is unchanging. Nothing can alter the truth of this connection that we all share.

**Dear Katie,**

**Ages ago I took a Marma class, and I am curious to get a bite-sized understanding from you. I enjoy pressure to relieve anxiety in my day-to-day. Do you think some more targeted work would be a useful addition to my practice?**

**Karson, Ypsilanti**

Namaste Karson,

Marma, which translates to vulnerable or mortal, with the plural being marmani, is a practice that predates the Yoga Sutras! These vital energy points represent areas on the body where nerve and blood vessels come together. Pressure on these points releases neurotransmitters such as endorphins, which is one of the reasons why certain pressure points may assist in relieving anxiety.

One that you may be familiar with in a traditional public class is having foreheads on the mat, or a prop, in a Child's Pose. While in Balasana, with our foreheads on the mat we usually have pressure on our Ajna Marma point. This point is named for that same space between the eyebrows which also acts as a Chakra. If Balasana is a restful pose for us, we can relax into this pressure point to allow us to notice the stilling effects of that pressure.

There are 117 Marma in the body, and in each of us some are obvious, as they are tender, and others are harder to locate. If this is something that intrigues you, and that you find supportive, find deeper instruction in this practice with an instructor.

**Namaste Katie,**

**I am in need of a posture that can work, or start to work, on my adductors. The combination of activities over the summer has caused them to be extremely tight. I have tried a few stretches I have seen in a book I have, and it is not doing the trick.**

**Aimee, Dexter**

Dear Aimee,

So relatable. Lately I have noticed some tightness and strains and have not been able to trace the origin. Some of that I attribute to moving through life a smidge too quickly, and away from some of the mindfulness we discuss. Also, as you mentioned, having varied activities is wonderful for the body in terms of activating different muscles and keeping us sharp, but it can also overtax the body, if we are not taking time to allow muscles the opportunity to release and soften.

A classic posture to target the adductors is Baddha Konasana or Bound Angle. We will also hear this called Cobblers Pose and Butterfly Pose. The Baddha Konasana we are depicting is seated, there is also a supine version that is taught in many restorative classes.

To come into Baddha Konasana, we can be elevated on a blanket or bolster if that assists the elongation of the spine. Extending the legs out in front of the body, we can externally rotate the legs, so the inside of the thighs are moving skyward. We start to move the soles of the feet together. In the images above, my feet are touching. They do not have to touch. There are times when I leave a few inches between the soles of the feet. In two of the images, I am using blankets under the thighs to allow a softer release through the hips. If blocks or bolsters are a more comfortable height, use those! In one image, I am also adding in a forward fold, without blankets. All of these are choices and are based on the moment. If adding something feels good, add it and breathe into the space. If taking away a prop feels good, take it away and breathe into that space. The beauty of Baddha Konasana is that we can sit for a few minutes while watching TV or take a break from the computer for a few minutes and sit in the pose. Take a minute to allow a bit of ease into the day and into the body.

photograph by Heather Nash Photography

*Katie Hoener is a RYT 500, receiving her 200 and 500 hour trainings. She is also a Licensed Master Social Worker and a partner at Verapose Yoga in Dexter (veraposeyoga.com). Please send your own yoga questions to katie@veraposeyoga.com.*

# The Crazy Wisdom Kids Section

## Our Book Picks for Kids and Tweens

### *The Humble Pie*

By Jory John, illustrated by Pete Oswald

The Humble Pie likes to give others the spotlight. Aw, shucks!—they deserve it!

But when he's paired with his best friend, Jake the Cake, for a school project, he soon realizes that staying in the shadows isn't always as sweet as pie. Readers of all ages will laugh along as their new pie pal discovers that letting your voice be heard always takes the cake! Available on November 4th.

### *Harper Handles Big Feelings: Lessons for Littles on Anger, Worry, Frustration, and Other Emotions*

By Jayme Yannuzzi, illustrated by John John Bajet

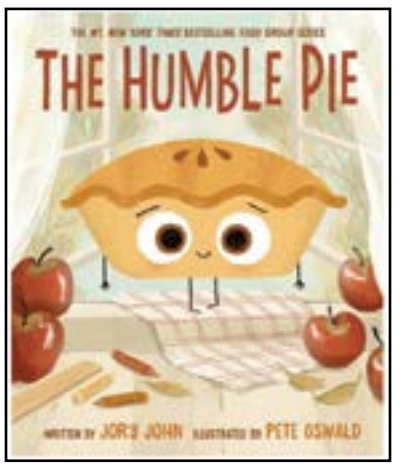
Does your toddler have feelings so big it feels like their body could burst? Harper, a young tiger who experiences a whirlwind of emotions on her first show-and-tell day at preschool, can absolutely relate! In Harper Handles Big Feelings, author Jayme Yannuzzi crafts an engaging and empathetic story that helps your child identify a range of core and complex emotions, from anger, sadness, and happiness to frustration, worry, and pride. Coupled with an easy and effective calming rhyme for managing big emotions that repeats throughout the story, Harper Handles Big Feelings will give your little one a strong foundation for emotional intelligence and resilience as they grow.

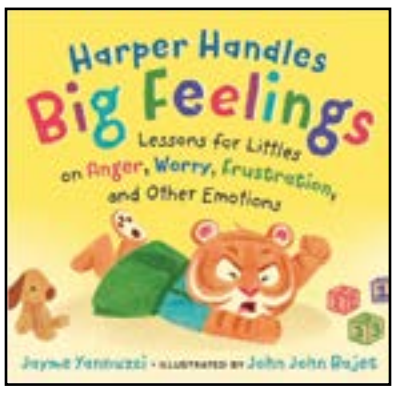
### *If God Were a Great Big Bear*

By Paul Harbridge, illustrated by Marta Dorado

If God Were a Great Big Bear is a rhythmic meditation on the nature of God in the world. Through the eyes of a child, this picture book invites readers to imagine God creating each element of nature specifically for the benefit of the creatures and plants God lovingly made. If God were a mighty whale, she'd make vast, mysterious oceans, wouldn't she? If God were a wiggly worm, he'd make fallen leaves and rotting trees and rich earth, wouldn't he? Rushing streams, mountains full of caves, sun to warm flowers, trees blazing red and orange, and seas full of friends in every shape and size—God created them all! God is in all of creation, and God is in you and me.

Creator God made a perfectly balanced and interconnected world to please not just us humans but every plant and animal, every planet and star in all creation.




### *Greenwild*

By Pari Thomson

Open the door to a spellbinding world where the wilderness is alive and a deep magic rises from the earth itself . . .

Eleven-year-old Daisy Thistledown is on the run. Her mother has been keeping big, glittering secrets, and now she has vanished. Daisy knows it's up to her to find Ma—but someone is hunting her across London. Someone determined to stop her from discovering the truth.
So when Daisy flees to safety through a mysterious hidden doorway, she can barely believe her eyes—she has stepped out of the city and into another world.

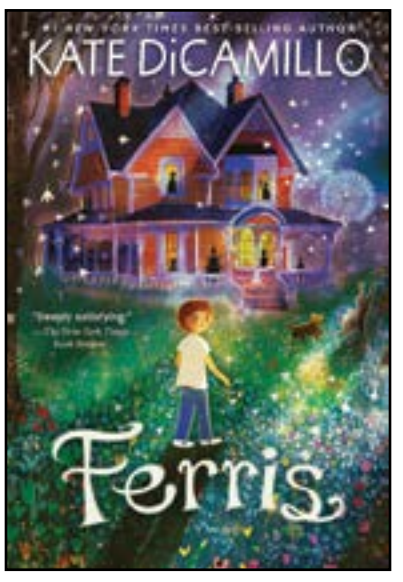
This is the Greenwild. Bursting with magic and full of amazing natural wonders, it seems too astonishing to be true. But not only is this land of green magic real, it holds the key to finding Daisy's mother. And someone wants to destroy it.

Daisy must band together with a botanical genius, a boy who can talk with animals, and a spunky cat to uncover the truth about who she really is. Only then can she channel the power that will change her whole world . . . and save the Greenwild itself.

### *Ferris*

By Kate DiCamillo

It's the summer before fifth grade, and for Ferris Wilkey, it is a summer of sheer pandemonium: Her little sister, Pinky, has vowed to become an outlaw. Uncle Ted has left Aunt Shirley and, to Ferris's mother's chagrin, is holed up in the Wilkey basement to paint a history of the world. And Charisse, Ferris's grandmother, has started seeing a ghost at the threshold of her room, which seems like an alarming omen given that she is also feeling unwell. But the ghost is not there to usher Charisse to the Great Beyond. Rather, she has other plans—wild, impractical, illuminating plans. How can Ferris satisfy a specter with Pinky terrorizing the town, Uncle Ted sending Ferris to spy on her aunt, and her father battling an invasion of raccoons? As Charisse likes to say, "Every good story is a love story," and Kate DiCamillo has written one for the ages: emotionally resonant and healing, showing the two-time Newbery Medalist at her most playful, universal, and profound.



# Molly Ging

## Owner of Ann Arbor's The Little Seedling

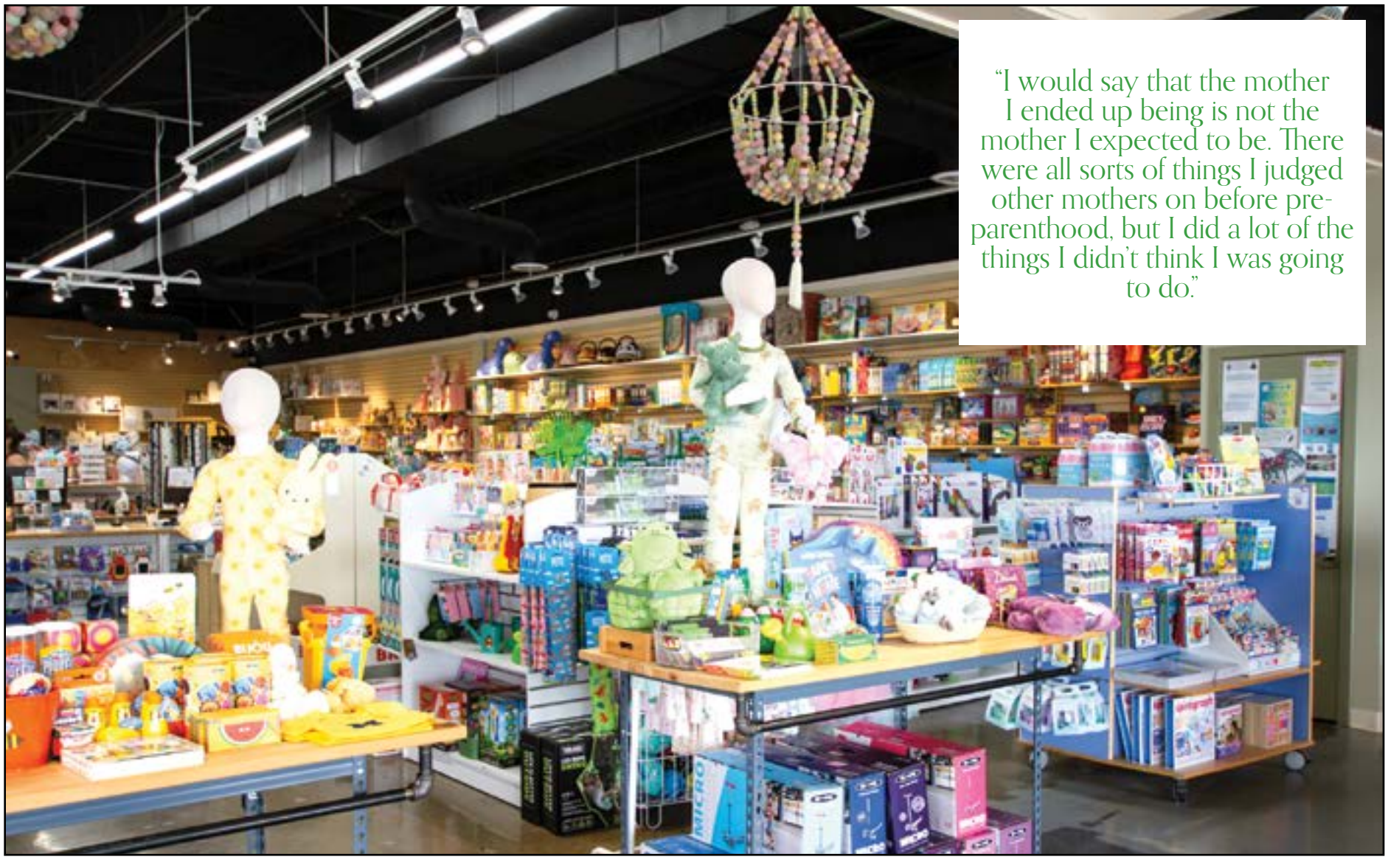
By Kaili Brooks • Photos by Susan Ayer

As a mother, entrepreneur, and community figure, Molly Ging provides local families with what they need most—support, and the best baby gear available. We sat down to chat about motherhood, philosophy, Ann Arbor, and the tenuous future of small businesses.

As a mother, entrepreneur, and community figure, Molly Ging provides local families with what they need most—support, and the best baby gear available.

**Kaili Brooks:** Tell us the story of how The Little Seedling began. Did you always want to be a business owner?

**Molly Ging:** It's a story I've told a million times, but I think it's a good one. I got pregnant with my first kiddo 22 years ago and planned on being a stay-at-home mom, and we planned on cloth diapering. When I was pregnant, I went to the phonebook to look up the diaper service in the area and was shocked to learn that there wasn't one. My mom cloth-diapered us. I never liked how disposable diapers felt, but I felt like I had no choice since there was nothing available. I was on a parenting message board one day and a woman told me I could do it at home on my own. I thought 'that's crazy,' but I started doing some research



"I would say that the mother I ended up being is not the mother I expected to be. There were all sorts of things I judged other mothers on before pre-parenthood, but I did a lot of the things I didn't think I was going to do."

and spent the first six weeks of my son's life trying out different diapers. I thought it was crazy that there wasn't a place in Ann Arbor to buy cloth diapers, so when I was six weeks postpartum, I turned to my husband and said 'honey, I'm going to start a business tomorrow.' It just snowballed. I started with a small purchase of 24 diapers, but eventually I became known in playgroups as 'the diaper lady.' It was never intended to be what it is now. Moms came and shopped in my basement and eventually we added slings and toys. It's always been about responding to the community's needs and wants.

**Kaili Brooks:** Where does the name The Little Seedling come from?

**Molly Ging:** So, it's less interesting than you think—it was something that was available. Originally it was Tree City Diapers, since we live in Ann Arbor. After my son Daniel was born, we moved out of the house and into a small store. The business kept exploding, but people would say things like 'I've heard of you, but we don't cloth diaper.' At that point we were carrying toys and diapers. We needed to change the name but didn't want to be too specific. I settled on The Little Seedling, singular, though people call us Little Seedlings all the time.

**Kaili Brooks:** What's your philosophy on motherhood? How has that impacted your business?

**Molly Ging:** I would say that the mother I ended up being is not the mother I expected to be. There were all sorts of things I judged other mothers on before pre-parenthood, but I did a lot of the things I didn't think I was going to do. My motherhood was in the blossoming of the internet and the beginning of the mommy wars and the judgement that comes with that. My philosophy has always been what works for me is important to me, and what you do in your own home is your business. I will never push what I believe on somebody else. If you want help learning how I did it, I'm happy to help. There's a balance. Find what works for you and find support in that; if you offer support, do it in a way that's non-judgmental. I've been in the thick of it, I get it. With my staff, the first question I ask in an interview is if they're comfortable with families of all types. You have to be comfortable working with every kind of family; we don't subscribe to any particular parenting style. I have wooden toys and plastic toys. We try to keep everything available, accessible, and judgment free.

When I first started being a mother, the culture was attachment parenting. We wore our kids in slings, my firstborn nursed until over two, he slept in bed with me, we fed whole foods. I've seen everything go in waves.

– Molly Ging

**Kaili Brooks:** What support or services do you provide beyond products?

**Molly Ging:** Sometimes I struggle with my position in a capitalist culture as someone who makes a living selling products. I could mark things up to make more of a profit but choose not to; I will refuse to sell you more than you need! If you want to come in and buy 20 carriers that's your decision, but I try to make sure families only leave with quality over quantity. As a business you get approached all the time for donations. I have some money I allocate to things I find important in the community. Any money I donate goes to the surrounding community, title-one public schools, and organizations that support underserved children first. The inequity in Ann Arbor schools is near criminal. I donate as much as I can toward the Hikone Afterschool Program (a free childcare program for underserved youth) since their funding has been absolutely obliterated. I let our employees bring their kids to work; daycare is unaffordable in this town. I never wanted to be separated from my children when they were young, so I let them bring their kiddos for as long as they need.

# Crazy Wisdom Kids

An ongoing section of
*The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal*

Articles, calendar listings, advertisements, music and book reviews, and other features that focus on raising conscious and spirited kids.

If you like our CW Kids section, and would like to contribute to it, contact jennifer@crazywisdom.net.
We welcome story ideas, illustrations, feature writing, and photographs.

**Kaili Brooks:** Have you noticed any changes in the culture of motherhood over the years of owning your business?

**Molly Ging:** 100%. The fact that we don't carry cloth diapers anymore is one. When I first started being a mother, the culture was attachment parenting. We wore our kids in slings, my firstborn nursed until over two, he slept in bed with me, we fed whole foods. I've seen everything go in waves. It shifted very much in the opposite direction; put your baby in a stroller, in their own room very early, cry it out. It was totally not my philosophy. Slings and carriers stopped selling, but now people are asking for them again. It's shifting back into a modified, balanced attachment parenting style. I wonder what philosophy my kids will adopt with their children; it's so interesting to watch the trends cycle through, and I suspect our parents felt the same way.

**Kaili Brooks:** What are your shoot-for-the stars goals for your business? What does the future hold?

**Molly Ging:** I can't do this forever: I work every day. Running your own business is not for the faint of heart. I'd love to be in business long enough for my children to become a part of it. It would be nice to see it continued. I know it will come to an end at some point. Up until this year we knew what to expect, but we've been thrown for an absolute curveball this year. Things that were expensive before are ridiculously expensive due to tariffs. This year is going to be a major testing point for the baby and toy industry. I've come up with a thousand other stores I'd love to open, but I'm realistic about what I have in me. I want to continue the work we are doing in a way that makes my soul happy, makes some money, and serves the community in the way it needs to be served. It's not super aspirational, but it's realistic. I'm more of a simple girl, I'm not here to be Bezos. I'm here to run a good business and be proud of it.

*The Little Seedling is located at 2465 W Stadium Blvd, Ann Arbor, MI 48103. The store operates from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday, and 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Sunday. For more information call (734) 418-2392. To shop the store's complete selection from home, visit thelittleseedling.com.*

the little seedling

# Balance Chakras to Build Confidence in Kids

By Michelle A. McLemore

Imagine being a young child. You are dependent on others around you for food, shelter, clothing, and safety. Your vocabulary is limited, but you pick up body language, tonal shifts, and some words. Most importantly, you pick up energetic vibes—both peace and distress among others.

2025 started off media-filled with terrorist attacks, new/old viruses, increased unexplained drone usage, UFOs, "smart" fog, egg shortages, California's wildfires, northeast earthquakes, a change in Presidents, and other potential anxiety-heightening situations. How did your young ones process what they were hearing and watching online or… while observing your reactions?

Your vocabulary is limited, but you pick up body language, tonal shifts, and some words. Most importantly, you pick up energetic vibes—both peace and distress among others.

The subtle energy system has always been integral to humanity's weave of existence. Though the media tends to focus on seven major chakras in the Hindu/yogic tradition, there is commonality across Cherokee, Incan, Pueblo, Tibetan Buddhist, and Sufi Muslim mysticism beliefs to name just a few. That being understood, there are major and minor chakras throughout the body—at every joint, nerve bundle, palms of the hands, souls of the feet, nipples, and more.

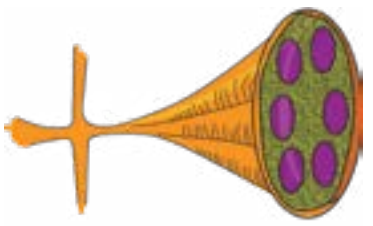
Through the work of researchers, energy practitioners, and psychologists, several parts of the subtle energy system have been proven. The 1979 Rolf study with Rosalyn Bruyere and Dr. Valerie Hunt proved core chakras exist and emit frequencies that cannot be attributed to any organ or other body system. These chakras include the root (in front of the tailbone), sacral (just below the naval), solar plexus (just above the naval), heart, throat, brow, and crown.
Of course, it is the parent or guardian's choice when to introduce one's child to the idea that our true nature is of pure energy that is connected to all of creation. However, parents should be educated about how states of chakras may be influencing their children and then learn ways to assist their youths' physical and emotional safety.

Doing activities which unconsciously help balance chakras can bolster a youth's health, clear thoughts, stabilize emotions, and build confidence. This can help them deal with any craziness the world (or universe) presents—and all without having to explain physics. (However, the teens I've worked with were always more invested when they knew what, why, and how the activities could help them.)

The subtle energy system has always been integral to humanity's weave of existence.

## A Condensed Anatomy Lesson

"Chakra" in Sanskrit means wheel—a rotating circular form. The lotus flower is used to symbolize the chakras. If we look closer at the center receptacle or flower saucer of a lotus, it resembles how Barbara Brennan, Rosalyn Bruyere, and other medical intuitives, describe what a chakra is built like. A chakra has several small vortices, or funnels, drawing from the universal energy field. In adults, the incoming energy and information is filtered and funneled toward the spine to connect with the nervous system, meridians, primo vascular system, nadis, fascia, biofield, and, if the gates are open, to the base template and hara line.

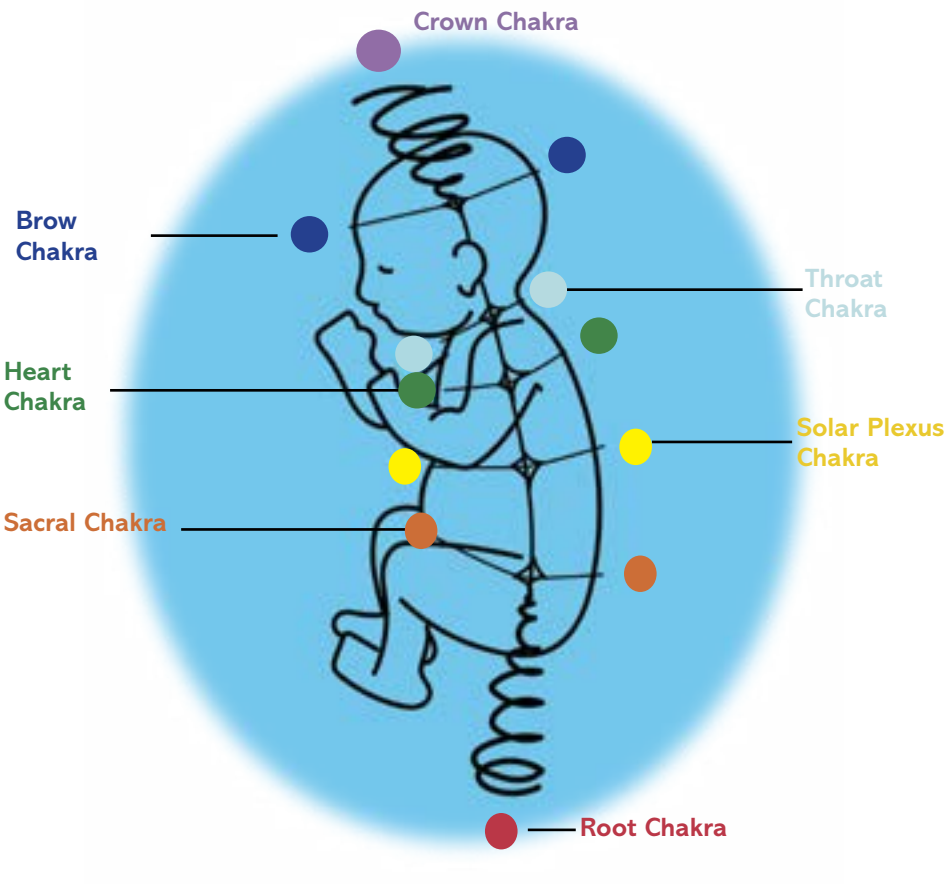


Adult Chakra

Child's Chakra

The 1979 Rolf study with Rosalyn Bruyere and Dr. Valerie Hunt proved core chakras exist and emit frequencies that cannot be attributed to any organ or other body system.

Just as the frontal lobe of the brain increases in complexity over years, chakras take time to fully develop. The root chakra is the first to mature for the baby. It anchors the subtle energy existence to the earth and assists the spirit to commit to this plane. The toddler phase—to about six or seven—brings the sacral chakra to maturity. Between seven and puberty the solar plexus fully develops, and the rest fall in order during adolescence per Brennan's *Hands of Light*.
In addition to the chakras developing from the root up, in the first few years, a protective film grows over the tip of each chakra. The filter is important to help regulate incoming energy frequencies. It is vital for guardians to understand that the filter doesn't finish developing until approximately age seven. Brennan notes, "This makes the child very vulnerable and impressionable. Thus, even though the chakras are not developed like those of an adult, and the energy that comes into them is experienced in a vague way, it still goes right into the field of the child, and the child must deal with it in some way" (87).




## Developing Biofield and Chakras of a Baby

This is the reason young children find such comfort sitting (or being held) in the lap of the mother: there the child receives some filtering from the mother's biofield which softens incoming energy waves and information. What does unfiltered energy feel like? Brennan explains, "Adult rage shocks the child's system like physical shock, while grief and depression swamp it like a fog" (88). After the filters are developed, the child feels safer because energetically, he or she truly is.

Before the filters are complete, too much energy (strong negative emotions, stimuli, concert level sound or sirens, energetic waves from any source) could physically distort the chakra and cause an overload or compromise input. Intense input may also overwhelm a young child's nervous system. Without a filter, or the cognitive maturity to work through their own versus others' emotions, the energy stockpiles in their field. This may cause a child who is struggling to acclimate to become hypersensitive, confused, or angry. They may try to withdraw from both situations and people.

If any disfiguration (to the chakra) occurs, and an energy healer isn't engaged to re-form it, malformed chakras or torn filters may contribute to diagnosis of agoraphobia. Anxiety of feeling overwhelmed in public places can lead some to believe staying home or in tightly self-controlled environments are their only option for peace.

Energy workers of all modalities (such as Healing Touch, Reiki, Sacred Geometry, Esoteric energy, Quantum Healing) assess chakras to determine open, compromised, or still functioning states. It is normal for chakras to be in flux during the day depending upon what the person is encountering. The higher the fear or distress level, the more inclined the chakras are, like flowers, to essentially close their petals up over the entrance which causes energy to skim over or barely flow through. When chakras stay compromised over time, physical health issues can manifest in the energetic field and the physical body.

**Doing activities which unconsciously help balance chakras can bolster a youth's health, clear thoughts, stabilize emotions, and build confidence. This can help them deal with any craziness the world (or universe) presents—and all without having to explain physics.**

Additionally, if there is repeat disappointment, or unrequited love, some children may intentionally push energy backward through a chakra, projecting his or her desires into the universal energy field in attempts to take charge of his or her life. This can cause distortions in reality if external life doesn't conform with this attempt at energetic manipulation. Chakras spinning in reverse long term could also leave the individual feeling drained because needed energy is pushed out versus circulating within the energy anatomy.

### Mental and Physical Health Disruptions Due to Imbalanced Chakras

Per order of development and space, this article will focus on the root and sacral chakra. According to the Healing Touch 2010 student handbook, imbalances in the root chakra can cause bowel issues, leg issues, lower-back discomfort, confusion, insecurity, violence, anger, fear, or worry, to name a few. There can also be feelings of isolation or dysconnectivity to the world.
If the sacral chakra is compromised, a person might dwell in guilt, self-denial of joy, have excessive constrictions or boundaries (mentally, physically, and/or emotionally) which can lead to obsessive attachments and addictions. In *Managing Stress,* Brian Luke Seaward outlined physical symptoms such as becoming more prone to vaginal infections, back issues, urinary infections, menstrual, and impotency issues as they age.

### Activities to Assist Balance in the Root and Sacral Chakras

The Root Chakra: As the root is humanity's connection to the earth, consider that any person's world is a bubble of life within which is its own ecosystem. With good neighbors, everything works to sustain each other. Co-existence is awareness, respect, and collaboration. Building a foundation can establish comfort before teaching the reality that ecosystems may occasionally have intruders. With a base understanding of their immediate sphere, young people may face challenges with curiosity and calmness versus fear. Root balancing will instill confidence, so that they understand they belong in their geographic space, their physical environment, and this planet.

Sample exploratory activities:

- Grounding—A small child does not have to intellectualize what "grounding" is when laid on a blanket to look at the sky or the tops of trees slowly waving in a breeze. Walking barefoot, in socks or leather-souled shoes, can assist with the root chakra. Couple the experience by mimicking nature and pretending to be a tree; sink roots down and invite in nutrients, elements, water, and energy. Invite your children to ponder how the bottom of their feet feel after a few minutes. Do they say wiggly or tingly? They may be feeling the energy move. That would be a good time to share, "That's good energy flowing from the earth helping you."

- Mirror Animals—For children who dislike standing still, encourage mimicking a bird walking or bunny hopping. Discuss how with each step, the earth is firm and reliable—like an ideal older sibling, parent, or grandparent. Basic yoga poses that mimic nature and aid the root chakra include stone, mountain, child's pose, low cobra, tree, and garland. Encourage slow, deep breaths and holding the pose for at least three breaths. Also, there should never be pain. If a pose is difficult, encourage the child to listen to his or her body: where does tension or difficulty begin? Pause and hold there while breathing.

# Balance Chakras to Build Confidence in Kids

## continued...

- Walk-about—As soon as a child can focus on details, begin yard and neighborhood walks. Regardless of whether you live in a suburb, city, or the country, familiarization with what is outside the home can create confidence and comfort for a child. Go on a "neighbor hunt." Make a chart to include consistent, safe, specific humans as well as types of trees, plants, animals, birds, and bugs.

- Befriend Nature—Discuss how to be a good neighbor to the other beings in the child's ecosystem. Greet a plant by its common name to show respect and reinforce group existence. (Plant apps can help.) Plant helpful window boxes, a potted plant, or mini gardens for biodiversity which nurture local species. Raise a baby spider plant in a cup of water for a child to love on. Or pot one herb and learn how to incorporate it into grateful, healthy eating. Perhaps also explore which bugs help the plants and the environment.

- Understand Defensiveness—In what ways do insects and plants have defense systems? Consider a "size, color, and texture" scavenger hunt. Some plants are spikey, fuzzy, or itch-inducing. Some bugs change colors or seek certain environments to blend in like Phasmatodea (the walking stick) or Phasmatodea (walking leaves). Inherently, a discussion would be natural about appearances—sometimes people like to blend in, sometimes to stand out. But either way, physical looks aren't the best criterion to judge value. For example, an ant has amazing strength and dedication to its team yet has a small, unassuming stature.

- Color quest—Fall is an excellent time to do a color quest. Take a paint swatch or pre-made color wheel on a walk. Look outside for nature items of matching colors. Note type of tree, plant, insect, and so forth without picking or harming anything. Teach respectful nature interactions: acknowledge the spirit of the plant, animal, or creation. Recent research proves plants register distress and some insects feel pain—consciousness at even a minimal level deserves acknowledgement and can be a starting point for youths to foster empathy.

- Find *THE* Spot—When a child explores a nature area, he or she may have a particular like, or pull, to a specific tree, shrub, or garden area. A caregiver can ask if any particular spot makes her/him joyful or giggly, warm or safe. That happy feeling is an invitation from something in nature in that area. The parent and child can introduce themselves to that location either out loud or telepathically. Sharing about the day and life dreams can open an energy exchange while helping to balance the child's throat chakra, heart, root, and sacral. A parent can model and practice with the child to listen, smell, touch, breathe, and exchange energy with trees via hugs, soft touches, or intentional heart shares. Sitting within three to four feet of it (inside its biofield) can help calm and balance the child's energy field and nervous system. Give appreciative small gifts such as loose tobacco, picking up and packing out trash in the area, or sprinkling fresh water, nuts, or seed cakes near the base of the tree.

**Just as the frontal lobe of the brain increases in complexity over years, chakras take time to fully develop. The root chakra is the first to mature for the baby.**

- Foraging—With older children and a more rural environment, explore the edible plants and resourceful trees in the area. Discuss the reality of look-alikes (some poisonous). There are many useful phone apps for this. Do not pick anything without 100% certainty it is edible and that the area has not been exposed to pesticides in run-off areas for farms, parks, railways, or factories. Also, before picking, first give a respectful acknowledgement to the plant and land; take only a small amount, and do not harvest heavily in any one spot. Empower tweens and teens with awareness that nature can offer sustenance. It might spark a love of foraging (which of course with each visit reinforces connections to the root and nature.)

- Reflection & Affirm—Upon returning from nature experiences, encourage the child to draw/write a story about how the neighborhood interacts. Then, have him/her orally explain the story. This synthesizes the root, heart, throat, brow, and crown chakras and helps to imprint the experience a little deeper. Build a reserve of positive nature experiences which they can return to at any age when nature may be miles away.

Know the environment. Respect it. Commune with it. Building that energetic relationship allows nature to whisper wisdom and insight to the child—even if it's in impressions versus understandable words at first.

**The Sacral chakra is the second chakra ascending the trunk of the body. Smooth flowing energy in the sacral helps with understanding others which strengthens relationships within one's family, tribe, and society.**

The Sacral chakra is the second chakra ascending the trunk of the body. Smooth flowing energy in the sacral helps with understanding others which strengthens relationships within one's family, tribe, and society. By being able to read people and build expectations (and healthy boundaries) the child builds security, trust, and confidence in relationships. It helps build a positive self-image, safety to be present to appreciate experiences, and openness to feel joy in creative endeavors.

Activities to help open and balance the sacral for youths often focus on creativity, communication, correctly identifying and productively working through emotions, as well as learning to give and receive safe and appropriate physical affection.

Creativity depends on imagination, playfulness, innovation, fantasy, and curiosity. It is the spirit which keeps us young regardless of age or wrinkles. There are playful exercises for every personality of child—extrovert or introvert, rambunctious or reserved. Choose what is just inside the child's comfort zone or just slightly out of it on a day they are feeling more adventurous.

- The line game—This game is played with a partner and there is no loser. One person draws a squiggle of some type on a piece of paper, then gives it to the partner. The receiver can turn the paper in every direction. Their task is to "see" what could be, then add to the line to make it into a recognizable "thing." The simpler the image, the better for the receiver to be able to guess what it is. To encourage simplicity in the line image, put a one-to-two-minute timer on the drawing time. When the image has been guessed, then the partners switch roles. The goal is to creatively bring something into existence.

- Design a yantra—A large circle provides the basis for images and colors that help promote meditation or quiet balancing time. Sometimes it is difficult to vocalize our emotions. Art can help get the feelings and thoughts outside of the body to promote balance and objective control over the emotion. To foster gratitude and a support system, ask a child to choose colors and objects that represent each person, place, and activity he or she cares about. Fill the circle.

To deal with a frustrating event or day, split the circle in half—maybe even turn it in to a yin and yang symbol. On one half, guide the child to use colors and objects that express how they feel in the struggle. Once that is full or complete, focus on the clean side. Help brainstorm the good that happened during the day or the consistent good things in their life (skills, hobbies, pets, people). The goal is to re-establish balance versus focus only on the upsetting. Discuss simply we cannot know what causes others to act how they choose, but often when behavior is surprising or unexpected, they are dealing with something not really related to us. Depending on what happened, it could be an opportunity to offer grace of forgiveness and mercy in our hearts for the antagonist of the situation who is struggling.

- Design and/or plant a perennial garden—For older children, establish small perennials for each important person in their lives. Spending time weeding and watering will offer a reminder that they need to likewise nurture those people in their lives. Encourage calls, letters, e-mail, or text messaging a photo of the garden stages. Teach that relationships need time, consistent care, and check-ins.

- Divergent thinking—The goal is to brainstorm as many options as possible without judging the feasibility or useability of any. Example: How many different ways can a paper clip be used (of any size, made out of any material)? Or, what's similar between a cat and a potato? To play with imagination without rules or continuous practicality nurtures dreaming, problem-solving, and an openness to possibilities which will help in all areas of life.

- Communication (verbal, non-verbal, and physical) can work for or against us depending on awareness. For kids, it can be challenging to pick up on all the cues being given.

- Play charades—Working with a team, it's a great way to casually show and discuss how facial expressions, as well as the full body, can communicate emotions, actions, ideas, and energetic vibrations. This can also be played to simply communicate emotions or social cues (i.e. What do the following expressions look like: friendly, sad, thinking, excited, hopeful, interested?)

- Art of polite and authentic conversation—Acting out a tea party or sand box casual conversation could include practicing how to invite someone to an event, practice sharing thoughts, and asking others' thoughts. Consider teaching the THINK acronym: Is what is discussed true (unless playing with imagination), helpful, inspiring, necessary (for safety or growth), or kind? Model restating words or phrases heard to show they are listening. For older children, discuss what it means to make a concession and align with someone—to find the common ground despite differences.

- Collaborative story telling—one person can provide a character, setting, or want; the partner then weaves the pieces into a short imaginative narrative. Or practice sharing about the day including one feel good and one event that they may have struggled with. How were they kind, or a good neighbor, to peers, teachers, or others during the day? How were others a good neighbor or kind to them?

- Sign language—Like was mentioned with art, sometimes we are too conflicted to do much. Teach a few basic signs to use for when life, and even talking, seems really hard. Consider: I need a hug, sad, tired, hungry/thirsty, confused, hurt/pain, and I love you. A site that could be helpful is spreadthesign.com/en.us/search/.

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# Balance Chakras to Build Confidence in Kids continued...

Emotions: Learning to identify one's feelings leads to how to work through them in a useful way. The range of emotions can be complicated. Discussion or activities should reflect the complexity as the child ages. "Sad" for a toddler could be "disappointment" for a six-year-old and be narrowed to feeling "betrayed" for a fourteen-year-old. The disappointment could lead to manifest as frustration. Likewise, being confused could lead to being overwhelmed which could manifest as sorrow or anger or a complete shutdown.

Emotions help people figure out what they think and offer the opportunity to analyze the beliefs behind those thoughts. Over time, beliefs may no longer be helpful, nor healthy, and should be modified or dropped. Effective relationships and communication are usually based on one or both people having high levels of emotional intelligence (the ability to correctly identify an emotion and respond without escalating a situation).

- Emotion Scale—for young ones, the medical pain scale or an emoticon board are concrete tools to help identify how someone is feeling and give it a name. Another way to talk about emotions is to give it a number of intensity. I might feel 2/5 confused on a government concept but feel 5/5 love for peanut butter cups.

- Sharing emotions—Build time in the day to discuss feelings, like "Feelings at 5" or "Sharing at 7." It should be when neither parent nor child is in the middle of things. Establish it as a minimum 10-minute check in for sharing. Sit at the child's eye level with open body language, and ask, "How are you feeling today?" If the child is reluctant and answers with a quick, "Okay," expand the question to, "What emotions have you felt recently? What happened or were you thinking when you had these feelings? How are you doing with the feelings? Do you need/want a different way to think about what happened?"

    - Encourage them to ask the adult partner as well. To feel valued, being listened to is as vital as needing to be asked how someone is. If there is a problem, model sentence starters: "I feel sad because . . ." or "I thought we were going to do x, but we didn't. So, I feel Y." This safe discussion opens up explaining why life sometimes doesn't go as planned, but there can still be love and respect despite different viewpoints. Feeling shares should end with respectfully thanking the other for sharing.

    - For some parents, this can be challenging if they weren't raised by parents who encouraged open communication. It can be a good growth experience for all but will require the parent/guardian to keep a check on her/his own emotions. Avoid taking anything personal or responding defensively. Take a breath and keep referring back to if the emotion is serving the child, if she/he can think about the situation differently, or do something to find peace and feel a healthier emotion.

- Yoga—In addition to aiding the energy flow and chakras, yoga can help release stuck emotions. Helpful yoga asanas for the sacral chakra include cat, cow, happy baby, camel, and bridge.

- Calling out Anxiety—Some anxieties offer opportunity. There may be times a perspective shift can be offered to help a youth move forward.

    - *Fear of failure* or embarrassment from "failing" can be flipped to reveal the opportunity to try something new, experiment, and improve. No one is perfect at something new. Trying new things builds neural connections and can lead to new hobbies or career paths. Conversely it can help narrow or weed out options that at first seemed intriguing but aren't good fits.

    - *Fear of rejection* enables finding someone better aligned for friendship as well as to test how determined the child is in what he/she wants to pursue. Encourage resilience by repeat attempts with modified strategies in appropriate situations.

    - *Fear of being alone* is an opportunity to learn to trust one's self and value the self. Encourage some alone-time activities like reading, drawing, walking, building, journaling, making videos, (not playing video games with others). If kids can value their creative and alone thought time, they will be less likely to develop overly dependent relationships. Trusting and valuing alone time aids both the sacral chakra and the solar plexus.

**Emotions help people figure out what they think and offer the opportunity to analyze the beliefs behind those thoughts. Over time, beliefs may no longer be helpful, nor healthy, and should be modified or dropped.**

Finally, some youths mistakenly develop the idea that worrying for, or about, someone is a sign of compassion. Instead of creating compassion, it creates paralysis. "Action" is an "act" of compassion. To be a good child, friend, or spouse doesn't mean one has to be overwhelmed by sadness when a friend or parent is. Parents/Grandparents can model compassion with a child by sitting near, helping breathe, and listening when someone talks. These are all ways to support and show love and respect. The energy phrase, "to hold space for someone" means to create a safe, loving space for someone to work through one's own emotions and thoughts. It is to be available when—and if—that extra support is wanted or needed. By staying grounded with balanced chakras, it can help a struggling friend calm her/his own nervous system, enabling that person to think more clearly and work through one's own difficulties.

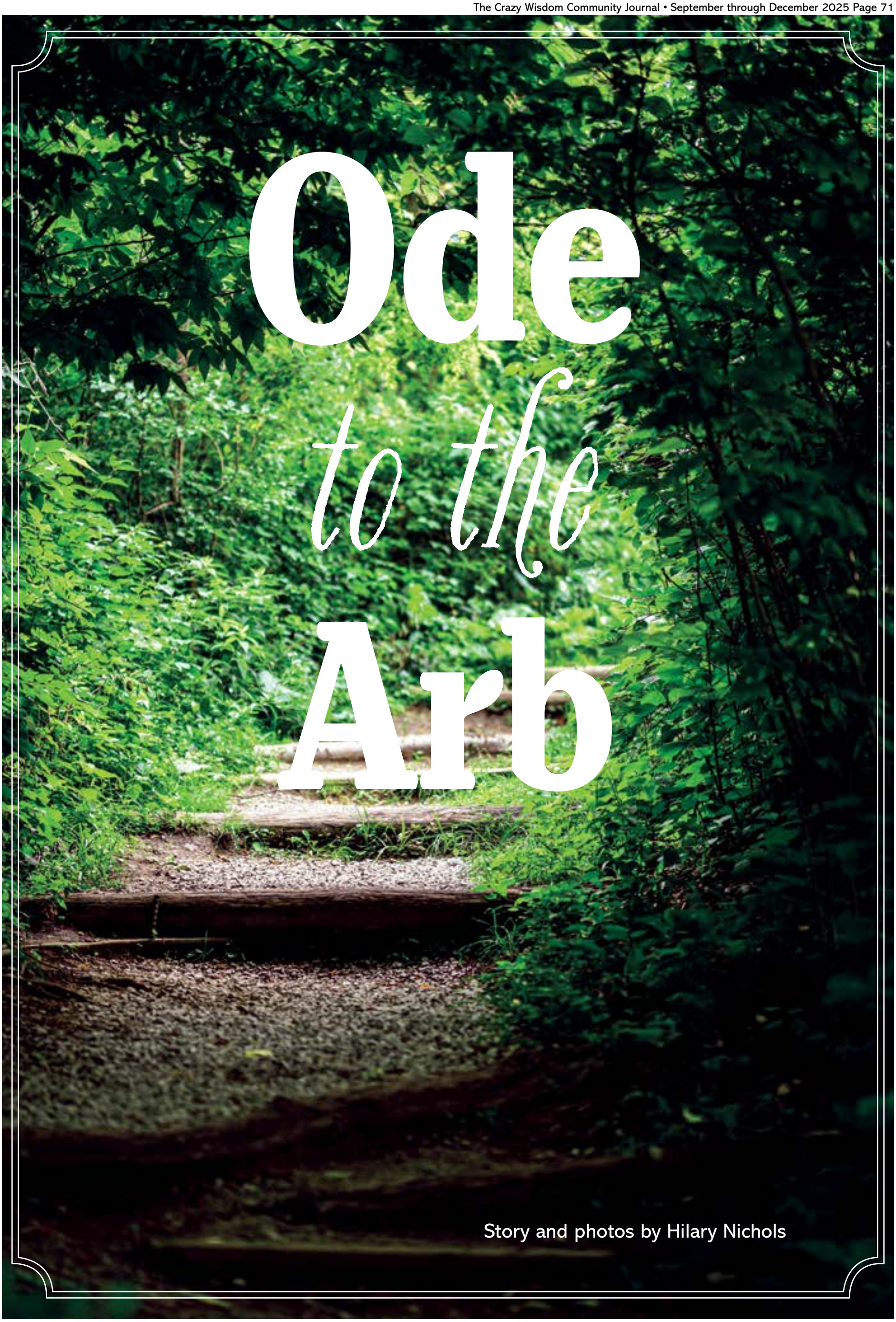
How we cope with confrontation, disagreements, and disappointment are all part of managing emotions and keeping the sacral chakra balanced; however, to go further exceeds the scope of this article. To briefly address them, consider an insightful story which recently circulated on social media. To summarize, it said, some people get bit by a snake and then spend weeks or months pursuing the snake to explain why they didn't deserve the bite.

Every animal acts to protect or further itself. In humanity, sometimes when people are not energetically balanced, nor effective at interpreting their own emotions, they tend to lash out—it may be a glare, a snappy tone, or injurious words or actions. Consider role-playing with a child if someone acts in a manner that is not expected. Teach the deep breath and pause. The sharp actions or words may not have anything to do with the child. The "snake" may be hurting or shocked by something that happened with someone else. They may not be physically feeling well, and it is throwing them off. They may even simply be really hungry.

Just like practicing to say "no" in situations is important to exercise the throat chakra with confidence, practicing saying, "Are you okay? You don't seem yourself," or "Your actions/words surprise me." Learning that others' actions don't have to be taken personally creates options for how the child may respond.

What if distress or a pattern of unease develops in your child? Holistic practitioners exist in nearly every community. Energy therapists can assist with balancing chakras helping both physical and mental health. The work is non-invasive, effective, and safe for pregnant women, the elderly, and everyone in between. Meanwhile, incorporating basic chakra balancing activities into your child's life early on will establish healthy life-long practices for your child. And, yes, these strategies can help the parent at the same time.

*Michelle McLemore is a freelance writer, workshop speaker, energy practitioner, and stress management guide --and she is currently working on energy-based stress management books and a parenting guide. Her background as a psychology and writing teacher supports personalizing client self-care to boost balance and vitality. Learn more at michellemclemore.com, facebook.com/MichelleMcLemoreHealingGuide, and michelle.mclemore on Instagram. Read more at mclemore.substack.com. Contact her at energy@michellemclemore.com.*



# Ode to the Arb

Story and photos by Hilary Nichols

# Ode to the Arb continued....

College students Maysen Gaulin and Josie Fairbanks enjoy the green spaces at The Arb.

Fanta Cisse & Fatima Diaw enjoy one of the many benches scattered throughout The Arb.

When you step through the wrought iron gates along Geddes Boulevard into the hushed shady entrance of Nichols Arboretum, between a wide pea-stone path to the left and a thin deer trail to the right, sits the first bench to welcome you. Benches are placed along the river side, on overlooks, in meadows, along trails, in the Peony gardens, and in countless shaded areas throughout this 128-acre preserve, inviting anyone to rest and take in the grand expanse of nature.

As a land gift from Esther and Walter Nichols to the University of Michigan, with the stipulation that it be used as a botanical garden, Nichols Arboretum was designed by O.C. Simonds in 1907. Commonly known as The Arb, this preserve is at the heart of what makes Ann Arbor so wonderful. Over 400 species, including 110 species of trees, secures our claims to the name 'Tree Town.' Everyone in Ann Arbor has a story about the Arb.

"I love that it is so close but so far removed from the city sounds. Surrounded by these tall trees, you are within steps but also a world away from the hustle of city life," said college student Josie Fairbanks.

"I love all the bird calls we can hear from the marsh birds below to the ones swooping overhead. We were just deciding which Arb animal we would want to be, one of the chipmunks or that bunny," college student Maysen Gaulin pointed to the bunny hopping across the path.

"There is so much space to walk my dog. We love to come and make friends with all the dog lovers," visitor Sam Gross told me.

"We come here to sing and to feel embraced by nature, like home, in Senegal," said Fatima Diaw. Her friend and voice teacher, Fanta added, "I come to write songs and sing in a safe and inspiring space. I feel grounded here. You get back to who you are in nature."

"It is so peaceful and protected. I come to meditate. You can join us," said Jayme as her meditation group gathered to sit on the stone steps of River Front Landing.

Robert Grese, Professor Emeritus of Environment and Sustainability served as the director to the Arb and Matthai botanical gardens from 1999-2020. When the University shared their 2050 transportation plan that included an elevated monorail, called The Campus Connector, between North and Central campus to pass through the Arb, Grese reacted.

His nine-page letter to former President Ono is a deep history lesson and love letter to the Arb. The proposed transportation construction threatened the very fragile and crucial ecosystem of one of the biggest parks and hearts of Ann Arbor with its 3.5 miles of intricate trails, uplands, wetlands, river access, the peony gardens, the meadow, and annual events such as the Shakespeare at the Arb series. Professor Grese is passionate about this preserve. He shared "The

construction of such an intrusive undertaking puts the very heart of our city in peril."

With his depth and detail of knowledge, Professor Grese left no stone unturned as he cited the impacts of past construction projects. "Were this to happen... this would permanently damage this cherished part of our University's and City Parks' heritage, affecting the experience of the approximate 350,000 visitors… looking for a quiet, restorative place to counter-balance the stress of life."

"Immediately I gathered my friends," said Rita Mitchell when she received the news from Bob Grasse last July. "These are the people you want in your corner. I knew we had to do something, and I knew my friends would react the same way," she reported. She held strong feelings about The Arb. "It is almost like walking through a magical door," she said. "This wonderfulness. There's a feeling of openness and an abundance of intricate sounds around me that is rare in a city."

"Rita and I work on so many different campaigns to try to protect our world," concerned citizen Lynda Asher said. "No one person can do everything, but everyone can do something. Put your foot in the game, or what is the point? Are you part of the community? Do you actually care?"

Asher has cared about the Arb ever since she first arrived in Ann Arbor in the 1970s. "I had never been to the Midwest, 'the God-forsaken Midwest,' as my family called it. On day three I met my neighbors. "Let's take you to the Arb, you will love the Arb' they said. I was in awe. It has always been this magical place to me." It is how she gauges potential friendships. "Their reaction to The Arb is a required value, they have to agree that this is a magical place," Asher added.

At an initial meeting at Argus Farm Stop, "Up came Sarah Nisbet overhearing our efforts," Mitchell recalled. "She joined in with us. Along with Megan Rose Simms they took on the title, 'Five Angry Women.' Together they crafted the language and put up a call for action to collect signatures to support their "Save the Arb' campaign on the public platform Change.org.

With over 9,700 signatures the University took notice. In their June 6, 2025 update, the University published "What about the Arb? The university is dedicated to the preservation of the Nichols Arboretum which, for more than a century, has been nurtured and appreciated as a special and unique natural community resource. For these reasons, U-M plans to only consider potential routes that would not pass through the Arb."

Rita Mitchell gushed, "We were ecstatic to read this. But I would like to be certain that the city and the University will work together to fulfill this statement. We need to confirm a commitment to the protection of all property that is identified as the Arb into perpetuity." The fight continues. This sentiment to save the Arb may be as longstanding as the Arb itself.

"It should be kept so that it might become a haven of quiet one hundred years from now when our rich native flora will have become a thing of the past in most places." This was from Professor Tealdi's response to a proposal to turn the Arboretum into a winter sports complex. Wilfred B. Shaw, notes from an Advisory Committee on University Arboretum, 1934

"As more and more of the natural beauties of Michigan are destroyed by commercialexploitation, the value of the Arboretum will become more apparent, and the vision of the donors and the far-sighted policy of the Board of Regents of the University and the City of Ann Arbor in preserving and developing it will be appreciated more widely as time goes on," wrote Aubrey Tealdi, Michigan Alumnus, 1922.

"We humans are under a lot of pressure right now. When we talk about the environment we work to protect the habitat for animals, birds, and insects. But we must remember, we humans are part of the environment, too," poet and dance instructor Megan Rose Simms said. "The Arb has a fragile eco system that includes us. There are those that walk in contemplation from the hospital across the road, the medical staff, and students, too. We don't know how much people may need this refuge of peace and healing in a critical time."

"When collecting signatures, everyone had a story," Rita Mitchell shared. "'That's where I had my first kiss' or 'I proposed to my wife there.' It is one of the best resources we have," she said.

Environmentalist, educator, and townie, Nate Ayers agrees. "All good vibes in Ann Arbor start and flow from the Arb."

*Celebrate Professor Grese's love for the Arb by reading his letter here: drive.google.com/file/d/1hlElokzgacvh2TvleqGyZtLSF_PMp8aj/view*

*And view the 'Save the Arb' petition on Change.org at chng.it/VRjF6KVb69.*

*Want to help keep the Arb a place of quiet comfort? Send an email to: Universtiy of Michigan Regents at umregents@umich.edu, or the Ann Arbor City Council and Mayor at citycouncil@a2gov.org, or the Ann Arbor City Administrator, Milton Dohoney at mdohoney@a2gov.org.*

**Megan Rose Simms, Catherine Fritz, and other meditators on the River Front Landing.**

**Jeff & Chrissy Rehberg**

Weekend Getaway

# Red Spirit – A Westward Escape

## By Petula Brown

First a confession: I got lost. As a seasoned traveler, I became overconfident, and my assumptions got the best of me. Getting low on gas, I exited US-131 near Kalamazoo for a quick fill-up, but the on-ramp back on to North US-131 was closed for construction. The recommended detour took me on US-89 through Otsego and Allegan. Though not the most direct path, it did get me to Fennville. I noticed street numbers were rising as expected to get to Red Spirit's 118th address. I didn't expect that streets intersected avenues that also had numbers. Combined with overlooking that Red Spirit's address is on 118th "Avenue," my drive on US-89 took me to the southwestern shores of Lake Michigan. Though an unintended detour, being blessed with good weather allowed me to explore the region that is home to a unique retreat experience known as Red Spirit.

**My path to Red Spirit was a bit circuitous but had nothing on owner Karen Duffin's journey to create the southwestern Michigan escape.**

My path to Red Spirit was a bit circuitous but had nothing on owner Karen Duffin's journey to create the southwestern Michigan escape. Originally from central Illinois, Duffin moved to the area in the 1960s, when her husband relocated for work. Circumstances led the couple to move back to Illinois in the early 1970s, but they wanted to return to Michigan to start a farm. Fast forward to the 1990s; Duffin was divorced and the owner of 20 acres of undeveloped land between Allegan and Saugatuck. Duffin became a caretaker of the land and when she saw a red glow enveloping the landscape, it moved her to name the area "Red Spirit." Few others have seen the glow, but visitors with psychic and wellness backgrounds "love the energy." It inspired her to create an intimate, restorative space imbued with natural beauty.

That natural beauty predates Red Spirit by thousands of years. The landscape's high ground and low wetlands were well-positioned for settlement by indigenous communities, which explains why arrowheads and pottery have been found in the area. In the 1800s, the purchased land was transitioned to agricultural use by A.M. Todd known as the Peppermint King of Kalamazoo. In the 1900s the site was a global supplier of peppermint before wilt destroyed the crop in the late 1930s leaving the land to serve as cow pasture (though still known as the Todd Farm to those east of Red Spirit). By the 1980s the land had become a residential property that included a cabin, barn, and manufactured home with minimal land maintenance.

From this foundation, Duffin's 1994 land purchase began her journey as a steward of the land and its wildlife. As a full-time resident, she could appreciate the area's character across all seasons. Duffin and the Kalamazoo Boy Scouts developed a symbiotic relationship: the scouts could make meaningful contributions that help them earn badges, like clearing trails of debris and overgrowth, and Duffin received support for her custodial efforts. She also pursued membership in the Old Growth Forest Network, an organization dedicated to preserving native forests throughout the U.S. Duffin's role extended beyond caretaker to cultivator when she led efforts to create a space for others to experience healing and rejuvenation that respected the environment. The result–Red Spirit.

As a retreat location, Red Spirit's 20 acres are ideally suited for people eager to "get off the grid" but not looking for a deserted island. Ready to pitch a tent for a fully rustic experience? Red Spirt offers campsites with grills, tables, campfire locations, and a commode. Interested in a solo getaway with more amenities? The Artist's Cabin offers beds, small appliances, and a screened-in kitchen tent as well as outdoor shower and commode facilities. Families or friends looking for group accommodations? Red Spirit's Main Cabin includes five bedrooms, two bathrooms, a kitchen, a screened porch, laundry, and an expansive deck outfitted with grills and a picnic table. Next door to the Main Cabin, Studio 64 provides a queen bed, additional bathroom and cooking facilities, laundry, dining/living space, and additional outdoor seating options. The variety of accommodations means Red Spirit can host larger groups interested in renting the entire property.

Regardless of where you stay, guests can partake in a peaceful landscape dotted with walking trails. Next to Studio 64, a one-acre Frog Pond provides a tranquil escape for reading, writing, or reflection. Red Spirit does have internet access but is decidedly low-tech (no phones, television, some cell service). As a hostess who lives in an apartment attached to Studio 64, Karen is not intrusive, but readily accessible, and creates homemade pies as gifts to guests. The retreat's cooking facilities allow visitors to bring groceries from local shops as well as supermarkets in nearby South Haven. Guests can also support area eateries such as the rustic Salt of the Earth, or the eclectic Root Café, the sandwich shop at Farmhouse Deli, or events at Everyday People Café.

**That natural beauty predates Red Spirit by thousands of years. The landscape's high ground and low wetlands were well-positioned for settlement by indigenous communities, which explains why arrowheads and pottery have been found in the area.**

Red Spirit's location between county seat Allegan and beach-haven Saugatuck is ideally placed for visitors interested in experiencing the contrasting communities. In my quest to find Red Spirit, I learned that family-friendly Pier Cove Beach and the Allegan State Game Area (the state's largest game area) are especially close.

**As a retreat location, Red Spirit's 20 acres are ideally suited for people eager to "get off the grid" but not looking for a deserted island.**

**While facility rentals are a focus, Duffin is excited to introduce Wonder Weekends in October. The intimate gatherings will provide guests with opportunities to meet people with interesting experiences and careers.**

With its natural beauty and proximity to beaches, it's understandable that Red Spirit has hosted a variety of activities, including family reunions, health retreats, educational workshops, scout outings, and performance groups. While facility rentals are a focus, Duffin is excited to introduce Wonder Weekends in October. The intimate gatherings will provide guests with opportunities to meet people with interesting experiences and careers. Participants can share perspectives and exchange information. Duffin describes Wonder Weekends as "a place to listen, learn, and be curious while you make new connections." The Wonder Weekends will give guests a chance to use the site's restorative setting to encourage creative thinking and intellectual curiosity, the foundation for discoveries. "Where you can walk the trails through an old forest" commented Duffin, "and wonder at how renewed you'll feel to make the world a better place."

*Red Feather is located at 6491 118th Avenue, in Fennville, MI 49408. Dogs are allowed to stay for an additional fee. For more information call (269) 355-3339 or visit theredspirit.com.*


# Anne Erlewine Art Exhibition

**Venue:**
**Crazy Wisdom Bookstore Gallery**

**Date:**
**November 1st through 30th**

**Opening Reception will be November 5th**

**Anne Erlewine works from her studio in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Anne's paternal grandmother was a fine artist who encouraged Anne to develop her skills early on. Anne received a running scholarship at the University of Michigan where she studied art and writing.**

**She also studied intensive watercolor painting and figure drawing at Naropa Institute in Boulder, Colorado, during the Beat Generation reunion.**

**Check out her artwork at anneerlewine.art.**

**For more Info email Chandra: chandra@crazywisdombookstore.com**

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# Tulpas and Egregores: From Amadeus to Appalachia

By Audrey Hall

*"All I wanted was to sing to God. He gave me that longing. . . and then made me mute."*

These words are spoken by Antonio Salieri in the 1984 film *Amadeus*, a historical fiction about his relationship with Amadeus Mozart. Though amicable colleagues in reality, this entirely fictional representation of these two individuals and their story portrays a demented Salieri who believes he is tormented by God through Mozart. On the surface, the film explores the fine line between serpentine jealousy and tender admiration between colleagues. In the spiritual realm, we see a deal with God gone wrong. Salieri swears celibacy in exchange for talent, but in the end believes himself mocked and tortured by the very same God to which he swore his oath. He believes God instead has chosen Mozart, a vulgar sinner, to be his divine voice in music.

On the surface, the film explores the fine line between serpentine jealousy and tender admiration between colleagues. In the spiritual realm, we see a deal with God gone wrong.

Whether or not one believes in the Christian God, it's clear that the spirituality of Salieri is corrupt and destitute. He calls the death of his father a "miracle" as it affirms the legitimacy of the pact he's made for the furtherance of his desire to compose music. While a Christian might say this is not the work of God but of man or the Devil himself, an occultist may look to the human psyche as well as ancient spiritual concepts to explain Salieri's experience. One may also point out that this is a fictional story and thereby requires no such explanation, but I believe these pacts and affirmations, or betrayals of them, occur throughout human history and society. *Amadeus*, even if an entirely fictitious depiction of these two men and their entanglement, is realistic in its depiction of this spiritual phenomenon.

In analysis of what occurs between God and Salieri, let's explore the ancient occult concept of the egregore. Used to describe the Watchers in the *Book of Enoch*, this word has taken on a broad spectrum of meaning circling the relative consensus of "a thoughtform or entity existing outside of physical reality created from and sustained by the thoughts, feelings, and intentions of a collective." In plain speak, an egregore is something between an imaginary friend, an idea, and/or a field of energy shared by a group of people. Some occultists have speculated that the very Catholic God Salieri turns to in *Amadeus* is an egregore, conjured from and empowered by the shared belief of Catholics the world over.

Whether or not one believes in the Christian God, it's clear that the spirituality of Salieri is corrupt and destitute. He calls the death of his father a "miracle" as it affirms the legitimacy of the pact he's made for the furtherance of his desire to compose music.

Salieri's God is distinct from the Catholic God. Obviously, his ability to interface with the Lord directly as a layperson reveals this distinction, but the Catholic God is also characterized by mercy and holding all life sacred. This is hardly the nature of an entity capable of murdering a boy's father to secure his ambitions. A Christian might call this the Devil posing as God, a favorite game of Old Scratch. Given the folkloric tendency of demons to facilitate contracts on false pretense, this conclusion is sound. Taking this again from the occultist lens, I believe Salieri has made a dangerous departure from connecting with the egregore of his people. His pact is with a wicked doppelganger of God, a tulpa of his own making.

In the case of Salieri, through his own pride, vanity, and selfish ends, he has severed himself from the Christian egregore and made a pact with a being constructed from the raw concentration of his frustrated, repressed ambition.

While the distinction between tulpas and egregores is hazy and at times indiscernible, most commonly egregores are understood as larger abstracts born of collective consciousness while the tulpa requires only one person's focus and concentration to manifest. The origin of the tulpa is in Tibetan Buddhism wherein buddhas, who have transcended time and space, manifest physical emanations to lead others toward enlightenment. Western occultists took this concept and, whether by arrogance or ignorance, reversed the order. Theosophists believe we can personally or collectively emanate a conscious being or "thoughtform" through heavy concentration and practice. With enough vitality and intention, these tulpas can even become autonomous or dangerous. It is my belief that practice is not necessary to the creation of tulpas, and that the process can be entirely unconscious and accidental.

What strikes me about this story is not only the way it plays out these occult concepts but also the way it holds reflections to my own life. Salieri, disturbed and wicked as he may be, was only a child when he spoke with God and formed this tulpa.

In the case of Salieri, through his own pride, vanity, and selfish ends, he has severed himself from the Christian egregore and made a pact with a being constructed from the raw concentration of his frustrated, repressed ambition. His aforementioned father cared nothing for his son's desire to make music and therefore became an obstacle in the eyes of Salieri. Hence, his death was a miracle Salieri retroactively attributed to the pact made with his tulpa, thereby feeding its power. Eventually, he attributed his fame, success, and talent to his deal with God, so much so that the tulpa became autonomous and dangerous.

He is then confronted with Mozart, a vulgar youth more talented than he could ever hope to be, which leads to Saliere to believe the tulpa he calls God has betrayed him. He goes as far as to cast a cross he keeps at home into his fireplace, declaring war on God by destroying Mozart.

Faceless Angel Tulpa

The difference between Salieri and my experience with tulpas and egregores lies in his inability to cut ties with, integrate, or destroy this malevolent spiritual presence he unwittingly created. Knowing would be half the battle, but even if he knew this God he hated was not his creator, would he truly be able to overcome?

What strikes me about this story is not only the way it plays out these occult concepts but also the way it holds reflections to my own life. Salieri, disturbed and wicked as he may be, was only a child when he spoke with God and formed this tulpa. Many children, including myself, have made this attempt to broker their wants and needs with an underdeveloped understanding of their respective egregore. Obviously results vary ruthlessly, leaving children to affirm or deny their connection to the egregore versus a tulpa of their own making.

In my own life, I knew as a child I did not belong in the church I was brought up in. I was from a very young age terrified of God and terrified of damnation. The backwoods Methodist God I learned of each Sunday was like a blissful cloud with eldritch horrors hidden beneath. While preachers waxed poetic about the ethereal beauty of heaven and the loving nature of God, there was also talk of the desperate plight of lost souls. I always knew I was a lost soul. Even after giving my life to God, I still felt his All-Seeing Eye staring deeply into me and judging me unfit for the kingdom of heaven. In this case, I would argue that the egregore created within the rural community I grew up in was accurately represented in the terrified eyes of a young, confused child who would later discover she was transgender.

Cast out by the egregore of backwoods Appalachia, I became quickly surrounded by tulpas both manufactured by my own psyche and implanted by my surroundings. I found solace in some, but their power was nothing compared to those sourced from beyond. On one side were the terrifying angels of God dragging me toward the light of conformity, and on the other were demons taking me further into darkness. These tulpas were autonomous, dangerous, and ready to make deals with a scared child with no understanding of what that meant beyond an already predetermined and unavoidable damnation.

When you grow up in a community so engendered by groupthink, a spiritually lost child has no guidance and cannot share in the light of their chosen egregore. Your alienation becomes the breeding ground of dark pacts, much like the deals made between Salieri and his doppleganger of God. These tulpas went on to torment me well into adulthood. For almost twenty years of my life, I experienced visions of Hell and relentless haunting. If it weren't for ritual work I've done in the last year of becoming a witch, I would still be as tormented as Salieri at the beginning of *Amadeus*.

The difference between Salieri and my experience with tulpas and egregores lies in his inability to cut ties with, integrate, or destroy this malevolent spiritual presence he unwittingly created. Knowing would be half the battle, but even if he knew this God he hated was not his creator, would he truly be able to overcome? Salieri's defeat at the hands of his tulpa lies largely in the sheer amount of belief and focus he feeds it, first through his fealty and then through his hatred. Once the human mind is thoroughly convinced of a spiritual truth, it seems confirmation bias takes hold and every occurrence in material reality becomes an affirmation. His father's death, his success, and being taunted by Mozart all affirm the fundamental reality of this laughing thing he calls God.


## Crazy Wisdom Poetry Circle

www.facebook.com/CrazyWisdomPoetry/

Hosted by Edward Morin, David Jibson, and Lissa Perrin

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At a workshop you are encouraged to present a poem you are working on for positive and constructive comments by your peers.

These workshops are held online via Zoom.
Write us at cwpoetrycircle@gmail.com
to receive the link a few days prior to a workshop.

The workshop dates are:
Wed., 9/10/25, 10/8/25, 11/12/25 and 12/10/25


In my experience, I was forced spiritually underground. I buried myself deep into nihilism and atheism, trying desperately to close my third eye to relentless haunts and visions. This was a matter of survival for most of my adult life. Upon escaping the Bible Belt and moving to Ypsilanti, I found myself finally able to breathe in the mystic again. Here I found power to destroy and/or integrate tulpas as needed and face the egregore of my hometown once and for all. This took a great deal of spiritual exploration, dialogue with other practitioners, and ritual work. I faced the hateful God of my childhood in a grand ritual called the Banishment of Angels, and I have not been haunted by him since.

In material reality, these were psychological exercises I performed to no longer supply belief to the tulpas and egregores causing me harm. My fear and hatred were as potent as love and obedience in the feeding of these abstracts. It sounds simple enough on paper to just stop believing in a concept, but when the development of your mind is so aggressively shaped by that concept, it's not so easily shaken. This isn't just true of God. Other immaterial abstracts like gender and race become unshakable aspects of our thinking regardless of scientific evidence showing how bankrupt they are fundamentally. It takes not just a year but a lifetime of work to shake biases and eliminate thoughtforms that cause harm in our lives and the lives of others. It begins with a conscious journey towards the awareness of their presence.

It is my belief that the thoughtforms we create are inevitably reflections of ourselves. It is also my belief that these thoughtforms reflect society, in that we are each unique and subjective reflections of society. One person's thoughtform blends into another, a tulpa becomes an egregore, and then a piece of the egregore becomes another tulpa. The cycle continues for thousands of years, fed by generation after generation of human belief systems. Each lineage passed down influences how we think collectively and individually—as early in our development as our understanding of language itself. It is not just God and the Devil playing games of good and evil within the human heart so much as the human heart conjuring spiritual forms to better understand itself.

I believe this is why *Amadeus* begins with Salieri's desperate cry of confession in solitude, "Mozart! Mozart, forgive your assassin! I confess, I killed you." It is in this moment alone that he faces his God and sees himself in the mirror. For the rest of the film, we see him constantly pulled between loving and hating himself, deserving everything but achieving nothing. He cannot abandon his tulpa because it reflects the cold mockery of his own heart, never being enough in his own eyes once Mozart's raw and miraculous talent cannot be ignored. His superiority complex is forever disrupted, even once he's tortured Mozart to death. We find him bitter and pathetic in the end of his life, delighting only in his torment of a baffled priest trying to save his soul.

Salieri created God in his own image, and saw it was bad. As folks say in Appalachia, "Bless his little heart."

a free guide to local classes, workshops, and events

# September through December 2025

# THE CRAZY WISDOM CALENDAR

Calendar edited by Kaili Brooks

## A Course in Miracles

**A Course in Miracles Study Group with David Bell • Ongoing Mondays • 6:45 to 8:45 p.m.** • All are invited to join a group reading and discussion of the text of *A Course in Miracles* (Foundation for Inner Peace). Additional supporting works are also presented and discussed. In-person and on Zoom. Donations accepted. For more information contact David at (734) 646-8475 or visit interfaithspirit.org.

**A Course in Miracles Study Group with Randall Counts: Zoom Only • Ongoing Thursdays • 7:30 to 8:30 p.m.** • The focus of the group is on practical application of Course principles to daily life. There is a mix of reading passages from the text, lessons or manual for teachers, and participant sharing of experiences as relate to those passages. Donations accepted. For more information contact Randall at (517) 750-8087 or visit interfaithspirit.org.

## Animals and Pets

**Irene's Dog Massage Class with Irene's Myomassology Institute • Saturday, October 18 • 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.** • Give your pup the ultimate treat—a relaxing massage from their favorite human (that's you). This fun, hands-on class teaches you simple, safe techniques to help your dog feel their best. Students will need to bring a dog to practice during on class. All shots must be up to date. $25. For more information contact the Institute at contact@irenes.edu or visit irenes.edu.

## Art and Craft

**Ann Arbor Gallery Nights "Conversations with Chris" with Chris Nordin Studios Gallery • Thursday, September 18 • 7 to 8:00 p.m.** • Chris, Erik, & Israel Nordin: A Journey of Creation with Three Brothers: An informal discussion about the background, creative accomplishments, and energy of these three amazing artists/entrepreneurs. Come to the gallery for an enjoyable evening of discovery and conversations. FREE. For more information contact Rita at (734) 834-2952.

**Opening Art Reception with Chris Nordin Studios Gallery • Friday, October 3 • 5 to 8:00 p.m.** • Opening Reception for featured, guest artist Ann O. Hilton. Join us to celebrate fine art, conversation, and enjoy some treats. FREE. For more information contact Rita at (734) 834-2952.

**Willow Basket Weaving with Michael Schoenberg & Deanne Bednar • Saturday, October 25 • 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.** • Come to enchanting thatched Strawbale Studio and learn to make a traditional Egg Basket from willow harvested on-site! In this frame basketry class, we will cover how to collect/process a variety of commonly found materials, harvest willow, and weave a useful, beautiful basket for gathering eggs, market shopping, forest foraging or gifting! $80 (includes all materials). For more information contact Deanne at (248) 496-4088, email ecoartdb@gmail.com, or visit strawbalestudio.org.

**The Art, Science & Reciprocity of EcoCreativity with Robin Lily Goldberg • Monday, December 1, 8, & 15 • 6 to 7:00 p.m.** • This interdisciplinary series illustrates how meaningful poems, stories, and paintings can emerge through co-creating with the Earth. We'll draw inspiration from visionary writers and artists to experience the regenerative benefits of collaborating with our environments. Everyone has creative capacities within, and everyone is welcome. $45. For more information contact Robin at robinlily@outlook.com.

## Ayurveda

**Ayurveda and Meditation with Dr. Kapila Castoldi • Sunday, October 19, 26, & November 2 • 2 to 4:00 p.m.** • Meditation and Ayurveda share the same goal: to regain the lost connection with our true nature and thus achieve the body-vital-mind balance that brings about harmony and happiness in life. FREE. For more information contact Kapila at (734) 994-7114, email castoldi@oakland.edu, or visit meditationannarbor.com.

## Bodywork and Bodymind Therapies

**Restorative Yoga & Reflexology Workshop with Andrea Astley Dinsdale of Crysterra Wellness • Friday, September 19 • 7 to 8:30 p.m.** • Enjoy this gentle, calming yoga practice paired with the healing benefits of Reflexology. This deeply nurturing and informative workshop teaches stress/anxiety Reflexology points and techniques for self-application, as well as a mini-reflexology session from the instructor. Suitable for all fitness and experience levels. $30/$35. For more information visit crysterrawellness.com.

**Hydrotherapy & Thermotherapy Certification Class with Mary Light • Saturday, October 4 • 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.** • Hydrotherapy and thermotherapy applications for better bodywork outcomes—The science, the experience, the results. A hands-on class; all materials provided. $200. For more information contact Mary at (734) 769-7794 or visit naturopathicschoolofannarbor.net.

## Book Discussion Groups

**Dr. Sue Morter's Energy Codes: a Facilitated Exploration with Lisa Patrell • Wednesday, September 10, 17, & 24, October 1, 8, 15, 22, & 29, November 5 & 12 • 7:30 to 8:45 p.m.** • Dr. Sue Morter developed the Energy Codes to offer radical transformation. The Energy Codes bridges ancient healing practices with science and is grounded with practical exercises and meditations. Lisa is a certified Facilitator and Coach of the Energy Codes. Proprietary and new material will be presented, discussed, and experienced. $469 paid in full or $159 in three monthly installments. An E-book edition is included. For more information contact Lisa at (734)274-6737, email lisapatrell@dellaureo.com, or visit dellaureo.com.

## Book Events

***Fuzzy Caterpillar* Story Time & Book Signing with Rowena Conahan • Saturday, October 25 • 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.** • Rowena Conahan will tell stories from her new book, *Fuzzy Caterpillar: Stories and Activities for Forest Kindergartens and Families*. These tales will enchant children ages 3-6, as well older kids and adults. Simple activities will be available to enjoy. Copies of Fuzzy Caterpillar will be for sale at a discount, and Rowena will sign books. FREE. For more information contact Rowena at (734) 660-6011, email naturespeaklife@gmail.com.

**Vampires on Vacation: Celebrate *Vampires at Sea* with Lindsay Merbaum • Wednesday, November 19 • 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.** • Join Lindsay Merbaum upstairs in Crazy Wisdom's Celestial Lounge as she discusses her book: smutty, horror-comedy novella *Vampires at Sea*. The novella features a pair of chic emotional vampires on a queer Black Sea cruise, where they meet the non-binary influencer of their dreams/nightmares. Orgies and emotional mayhem ensue. Join us for themed mocktails, a reading, Q&A, and signings with the author. FREE. For more information contact Lindsay at (510) 289-3774, email Lmerbaum@gmail.com, or visit lmerbaum.com.

# Our Calendar Editor's Picks of Interesting Happenings in Our Community

Art by Jennifer Carson

"Do Humans Have a Future—and How Do We Get There?" · See listing under Spiritual Development

Free Try–It Adult Tang Soo Do (Korean Martial Art) · See listing under Martial Arts, Tai Chi

The Circle of Embodied Men with Dan DeSena · See listing under

Trance Development and Healing with Chris Ratter · See listing under Energy and Healing

Steiner Health Fasting for your Health Weekend with Steiner Health · See listing under Holistic Health

Usui/Holy Fire® Reiki I and II Certification with Andrea Kennedy · See listing under Reiki

Irene's Dog Massage Class with Irene's Myomassology Institute · See listing under Massage

Transforming Consciousness with Diarmuid O'Murchu · See listing under Spiritual Growth

Active Against ALS Uncork a Cure · See listing under Exercise and Fitness

Willow Basket Weaving with Michael Schoenberg & Deanne Bednar · See listing under Sustainable Living Skills

Demo Rinpoche Salon at Crazy Wisdom · See listing under Buddhism

Moving Beyond Fear and Negativity: Accessing the Co–Creative Power of the Spacious Present with Barbara Brodsky, Aaron, Colette Simone, & Yeshua · See listing under channeling

## Breathwork

**Guided Group Breathwork with Jackie Miller • Saturday, September 7, 21, & 28; October 5, 19, & 26; November 2, 16, & 23; December 7 & 21 • 6 to 7:30 p.m.** • A group session of gentle, energizing breathing with music, guided by Jackie Miller, certified breathwork facilitator. Experience the power of breath energy and non-ordinary states activated by special breathing techniques. Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti locations. FREE, donations welcome. Registration required. For more information visit thisbreath.com.

## Buddhism

**Miracle of Mindfulness with Suzanne Xuereb & Georgia Greene • Ongoing Sundays • 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.** • The Huron River Mindfulness Community is a safe and inclusive meeting place for anyone to practice mindfulness in the tradition of Plum Village, established by Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh. This is a peer led group and there are four to five members that facilitate depending on the group. FREE, donations to Zen Temple of Ann Arbor accepted. For more information contact the HRMC at (734) 273-9991, email huronrivermc@gmail.com, or visit huronrivermc.com.

**Practical Buddhism with Gelek Rimpoche • Wednesday, September 3, 10, 17, & 24, October 1, 8, 15, 22, & 29, November 5, 12, & 19, December 3, 10, & 17 • 7 to 8:30 p.m.** • "Practical Buddhism" offers video recordings of earlier teachings by Gelek Rimpoche as an opportunity for some to revisit and as an introduction for others. A panel discussion with Jewel Heart Instructors follows each session. Discussions are not recorded. Sessions will review Gelek Rimpoche's 2012 Sunday talks and into early 2013. FREE, donations welcome. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

If you are interested in obtaining some biographical information about the teachers, lecturers, and workshop leaders whose classes, talks, and events are listed in this calendar, please look in the section that follows the calendar, which is called "Teachers, Lecturers, Workshop Leaders, and The Centers" and which starts on page 99.

# The Crazy Wisdom Calendar

## Buddhism continued...

**Jewel Heart Sunday Talks: Ancient Wisdom, Modern Times with Demo Rinpoche • Sunday, September 7, 14, 21, & 28, October 5, 19, & 26, November 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30, December 7, 14, 21, & 28 • 11 a.m. to 1:15 p.m.** • Join Demo Rinpoche for weekly Sunday morning public talks on a variety of topics that are suitable for newcomers and long-timers alike, followed by a facilitated group discussion based on the morning talk. FREE, donations welcome. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

**Ullambana Day with Jagwa Kelli Davenport • Sunday, September 7 • 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.** • Rites and service for the dead to wish them a rightful place among the living and release from suffering in their next rebirth. Prior consultation appointment necessary. Suggested donation $20. For more information contact the Zen Buddhist Temple at (734) 761-6520 or email annarborzentemple@gmail.com.

**The Bodhisattva's Way of Life: Enthusiasm! (Chapter 7) with Demo Rinpoche • Thursday, September 11, 18, & 25, October 2, 9, 23, & 30, November 6, 13, & 20 • 7 to 8:30 p.m.** • Shantideva's Bodhisattva's Way of Life is among the most beloved and inspiring works in the Mahayana Buddhist tradition. It gives detailed instructions on the benefits and methods of living in accordance with the bodhisattva ideals of unselfishly helping others. This course focuses on chapter 7, enthusiasm. $70 Jewel Heart member/$90 Jewel Heart non-member. Give what you can; no one is turned away. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

**Year-End Candle-Lighting Service with Maum Gloria Cox • Wednesday, December 31 • 8 to 10:00 p.m.** • This is an occasion to take stock of one's life and to greet the new year in contemplation and reflection. Everyone is welcome to come share this beautiful service with us. $20 donation. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

**Crazy Wisdom Salon – An Evening with Demo Rinpoche, Spiritual Director of Jewel Heart Tibetan Buddhist Center, in Conversation with Bill Zirinsky of Crazy Wisdom • Wednesday, October 22 • 7pm** • An opportunity to get to know Demo Rinpoche, the 44 year old leader of Jewel Heart, the Ann Arbor-based Tibetan Buddhist Center with students, and satellite locations, across the U.S. and around the world. Long-time Crazy Wisdom co-owner Bill Zirinsky, as the host, will be using a question-and-answer format, and also invite active audience questions and comments. For additional information about this event, please see the half-page advertisement in this issue of the Crazy Wisdom Journal, on Page 9. Or email: billz@crazywisdom.net or kathy@jewelheart.org. Location: Crazy Wisdom's Celestial Lounge on the Second Floor. FREE, no advance registration needed.

## Ceremonies, Celebrations, and Rituals

**Sunday Celebration with Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth • Ongoing Sundays • 10:45 a.m. to Noon** • We explore universal truths from all spiritual paths. Donations are gratefully received. For more information visit interfaithspirit.org.

**Reflection On the Labyrinth with Kathleen Schanz & Esther Kennedy • Saturday, September 13 • 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.** • For 25 years, our campus has welcomed many people who have found peace, calm, and awareness in walking this sacred outdoor path. Gather with us and with the sisters who brought the labyrinth to Adrian as we walk peace and hope into our world. FREE. For more information contact the Weber Center (517)-266-4000 or visit webercenter.org.

**Autum Equinox Dances of Universal Peace with Susan Slack • Sunday, September 21 • 3 to 4:30 p.m.** • You are invited to chant and dance together to celebrate the balance of the Equinox. Join your community of seekers without dogma. All simple steps and chants patiently taught. Experience love, harmony, and beauty from the Earth's wisdom traditions. Donation based. For more information contact Susan at peaceinacircle@gmail.com,visit dancesofuniversalpeace.org, or visit slacksusan.wixsite.com.

**Autumn Equinox Ritual Celebration with Esther Kennedy • Sunday, September 21 • 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.** • The harvest is near. We gather the riches of the Earth with great gratitude. We celebrate the abundance and come together in word, song, and dance to welcome autumn. FREE. For more information contact the Weber Center (517)-266-4000 or visit webercenter.org.

**Satsang, Yoga Nidra, Meditation, & Kirtan with Swami Sankarananda, Swami Yatidharmananda, & Trevor Eller • Saturday, October 4 • 2:30 to 9:00 p.m.** • Join a joyful and uplifting afternoon and evening of community, Yoga, and Full Moon Kirtan with Swami Sankarananda, Trevor Chaitanya Eller, and friends as we welcome Swami Yatidharmananda to our community of Divine Friends. Donations welcome. For more information visit interfaithspirit.org or divinegraceyoga.org.

**Women's Goddess Circle with Chandra Mitchel • Wednesday, October 15 • 6 to 8:30 p.m.** • The women's goddess circle is a monthly meetup for Maven/Late Millennial/GenX+ women. Everyone is welcome but topics will center around these ages and stages. Topics include goddess study, seasonal crafting, intention-setting activities, political discussion, connection, and more! FREE. For more information contact Chandra at chandra@crazywisdombookstore.com.

**Candlelight Labyrinth Walk with Rob Meyer-Kukan • Friday, October 24 • 6 to 7:00 p.m.** • Join Veriditas trained Labyrinth Facilitator, Rob Meyer-Kukan for a candlelight labyrinth walk. This event is offered as a donation-based event to support this and future labyrinth events. Suggested donation, $10/person. For more information contact Rob at (248) 962-5475, email contact@7notesnaturalhealth.com, or visit 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

There is something so special in the
early leaves drifting from the trees –
as if we are all to be allowed a chance
to peel, to refresh, to start again.
– Ruth Ahmed

**Winter Solstice Ritual Celebration with Esther Kennedy • Sunday, December 21 • 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.** • With joy and anticipation, we await the coming light, rising from within the darkness. Teilhard de Chardin states, "There is light and only light ahead of us." In song and dance we remember that "we are light for those we meet and for our world." FREE. For more information contact the Weber Center (517)-266-4000 or visit webercenter.org.

## Channeling

**Moving Beyond Fear and Negativity: Accessing the Co-Creative Power of the Spacious Present with Barbara Brodsky, Aaron, Colette Simone, & Yeshua • Friday, September 24** • Join us for an evening of conversation with spirit friends—Yeshua, Mary Magdalene, Aaron, and others—offering insight on staying grounded and open-hearted in turbulent times. Barbara Brodsky and Colette Simone of Deep Spring Center serve as mediums. Hosted at Crazy Wisdom's Celestial Lounge. FREE, donations welcome. For more information contact the Deep Spring Center at (734) 477-5848, email om@deepspring.org, or visit deepspring.org.

**Remembering Wholeness: Darshan with the Mother & Barbara Brodsky • Tuesday, September 28, October 26, November 23, & December 14 • 2 to 5:00 p.m.** • Darshan with The Mother offers loving guidance to support your journey. The Mother speaks both personally and collectively, addressing where we may feel stuck and helping release what no longer serves. With support from Aaron and Yeshua, she shares messages of wholeness, always holding each being in a container of deep, unconditional love and compassion. Suggested donation: single $10-30; all $40-$120. For more information contact the Deep Spring Center at (734) 477-5848, email om@deepspring.org, or visit deepspring.org.

**Evenings with Aaron & Barbara Brodsky • Wednesday, October 1 & 29, November 19, & December 10 • 7 to 9:00 p.m.** • Evenings with Aaron meets monthly and is open to all. Since 1989, Aaron has offered insight on current world issues, guiding us to respond from loving awareness. He reminds us all experiences are teachers, encouraging dynamic compassion—living spiritually grounded lives. Some evenings include specific practices or guest teachings from Aaron's spirit friends, plus open discussion. Suggested donation: single $10-30; all $40-$120. For more information contact the Deep Spring Center at (734) 477-5848, email om@deepspring.org, or visit deepspring.org.

## Death and Dying

**Death Cafe with Rev. Annie Kopko • Tuesday, September 2, October 7, November 4, & December 2 • 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.** • A group-directed discussion of death, with no agenda, objectives, or themes. It is a discussion group rather than a grief-support or counseling session. FREE, but donations gratefully received. For more information visit interfaithspirit.org.

**Ann Arbor Virtual Death Café with Rachel Briggs • Tuesday, September 6, October 4, November 1, & December 6 • 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.** • Conversation on zoom about all things related to death and dying. Participants join in small and large group discussion with deep listening and sharing from the heart. No agenda, no presentation. For more info visit www.DeathCafe.com. Open to all adults. Please note: This is not a grief support group. For more information contact Merilynne at (734) 395-9660, email thedyingyear@gmail.com, visit thedyingyear.org or DeathCafe.com

**Michelle Camilleri**, a holistic practitioner for over twenty-five years, Camilleri guides clients through deeply personal healing journeys using reflexology, craniosacral therapy/somato emotional release, heart centered therapy, and sound therapy. Her approach is intuitive and heart-centered, rooted in the belief that healing begins with intention—whether it's to release chronic pain, emotional wounds, limiting beliefs, or long-held fear.

Camilleri's own journey into the healing arts began during her fashion advertising styling career in New York City. During this time, she felt a deep inner calling for greater meaning and balance. That search led her to a transformational retreat in the Puerto Rican rainforest, where she received her first reflexology session. The experience was profound—and life-changing. Upon returning to NYC, she enrolled in the Reflexology Certification Program at the New York Open Center.

Her exploration expanded to Craniosacral Therapy through the Upledger Institute, where she found herself drawn to the gentle, yet powerful work of releasing physical and emotional tension from the central nervous system. This work deepened her appreciation for the body's innate ability to self-heal when supported and heard.

More recently, sound therapy became a natural extension of her practice. See her lisiting for a sound bath meditation under the calendar heading Music, Sound, and Voice. Follow her on Instagram @soleful77 for other events. For more information regarding her practice visit her website at soleful29.com

Heidi Schmitz, LMSW-C
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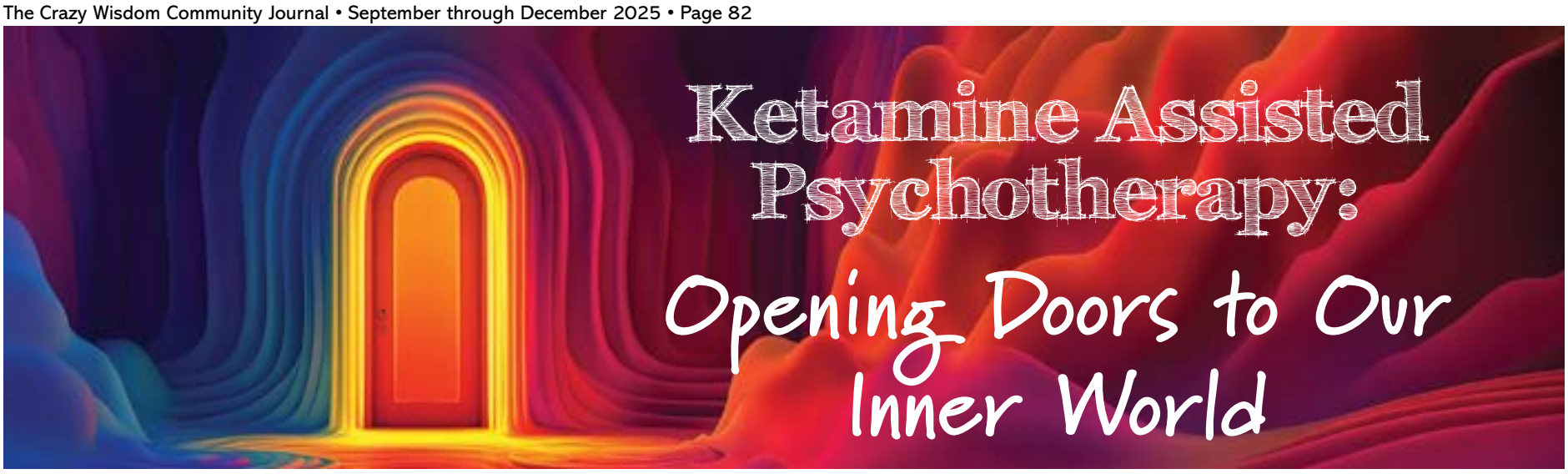
103 E. Liberty St. Suite 206
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
Therapy for...
life changes/transitions • depression • anxiety
trauma • substance use and recovery
grief and loss • climate distress
challenges related to aging



# Ketamine Assisted Psychotherapy: Opening Doors to Our Inner World

By Hugh Ransley, MA, LLP

Life is a journey of growth and change. Along this path, we all face common human struggles—times of pain, feeling disconnected, and searching for meaning. In today's world, we're constantly bombarded with messages telling us to find happiness through buying things, creating certain identities, or living particular lifestyles. This pulls us away from our inner wisdom and authentic self.

How do we stay connected to who we really are amid all this noise? How do we touch that deeper part of ourselves?

Throughout history, people have tried to understand their own minds and find meaning in life. We've created many ways to access deeper awareness—from meditation and prayer to art and storytelling. Indigenous cultures worldwide have also worked with plant medicines like ayahuasca, peyote, and psilocybin mushrooms as tools for healing, connection, and spiritual insight. Sacred plant teachers continue to be central to many traditional healing systems offering pathways to expanded awareness and communion with nature and spirit.

The use of plant medicines for healing and wisdom continues today with many people finding profound benefits from these ancient traditions when used respectfully and in appropriate contexts. One common thread, in almost every practice, is that there's more to our experience than what we normally see in our day-to-day consciousness. This day-to-day consciousness, along with our ability to reflect on ourselves, is both uniquely human and can create special kinds of suffering.

We build stories about ourselves and the world that can trap us in rigid thinking patterns. We start believing these stories are absolute truth rather than just one way of seeing things. This forgetting is at the root of much human suffering.

The use of plant medicines for healing and wisdom continues today with many people finding profound benefits from these ancient traditions when used respectfully and in appropriate contexts.

**What is Ketamine Assisted Psychotherapy?**

Ketamine Assisted Psychotherapy (KAP) combines the medicine ketamine with skilled psychotherapy to create a powerful healing approach. Ketamine is a routine medication that has been used safely as an anesthetic for decades. In much lower doses than those used for anesthesia, ketamine can create a temporary altered state of consciousness that helps people access different parts of their mind.

In KAP, you take ketamine under the supervision of trained professionals, usually by lozenge, or sometimes as a nasal spray. As the medicine takes effect (typically within 15-20 minutes), you experience a shift in perception and consciousness. This lasts approximately 45-90 minutes, during which you lie comfortably, often wearing eyeshades, and listening to carefully curated soundscapes to support the journey.

- The ketamine itself creates several important effects:
- It rapidly reduces symptoms of emotional distress
- It temporarily changes how the brain processes information
- It creates a state where you can view your life and problems from a new perspective
- It helps the brain form new connections

Unlike typical medications that you take daily, ketamine is used as a catalyst for therapeutic experiences that occur during specific sessions. Ketamine prescribed for KAP is only taken by the client during the supervised KAP sessions.

**Ketamine Therapy: A Window to the Self**

KAP offers a modern approach to this age-old human quest for healing and insight. It helps your own inner wisdom emerge. With a trained therapist's guidance, you can gain perspectives that are hard to reach in everyday life. The experience tends to loosen your grip on your usual sense of self and can offer profound insights into who we are beneath our everyday thinking mind.

Many people describe the ketamine experience as allowing them to observe their thoughts and emotions from a distance with less judgment and reactivity. This creates an opportunity to relate to difficult experiences in new ways. The medicine itself has an interesting effect of giving some separation from the ego creating an opportunity for self-reflection and learning.

Think of it this way: ketamine temporarily shifts the boundary between your everyday awareness and a deeper level of consciousness that's usually hidden from view. Your ordinary consciousness is like a small selection from a much larger field of awareness.

This matches experiences we've all had—those moments when an idea or solution seems to "come to us" from somewhere beyond our normal thinking. Artists, scientists, and inventors throughout history have described similar experiences of receiving insights rather than creating them.

**The Journey of Self-Discovery**

During ketamine sessions, many people report feeling more emotionally open, mentally flexible, and able to reflect on themselves in new ways. They often access thoughts, feelings, and memories that were previously out of reach.

Ketamine helps the brain form new connections. This creates a window where insights can more easily lead to new ways of thinking. People find that KAP helps them in the following ways:

- Break free from thought patterns that no longer help them
- See long-term problems in new ways
- Experience major shifts in how they view themselves and the world
- Face difficult emotions with more compassion

At higher doses, ketamine can create profound experiences including feelings of unity with others or the universe, a sense of moving beyond time and space, meaningful symbolic experiences, feelings of sacredness, and a sense of encountering deep truths.

These experiences connect to what many wisdom traditions have described: a sense that our everyday reality emerges from something deeper and more unified.

**Acceptance: The Heart of Healing**

Learning to accept "what is" emerges as a central benefit of KAP. This acceptance matters deeply because accepting ourselves allows us to accept reality as it is, rather than how we wish it would be.

As humans, we don't like to see ourselves as confused, afraid, selfish, or flawed. Yet during KAP sessions, people often see themselves more completely—both their strengths and their struggles. This can be challenging, but it's an essential part of becoming more self-aware.

To truly change and grow, we need to first accept ourselves as we are. When we see ourselves more clearly during KAP sessions, we begin to accept all parts of ourselves, which helps us recognize and accept others more fully, too.

By temporarily shifting the boundaries between ordinary awareness and deeper aspects of mind, KAP creates healing through expanded awareness rather than forced change. Integration of insights and breakthroughs can take place following the KAP experience.

Integrated Counseling in Ann Arbor is committed to making KAP more accessible by offering affordable options for this transformative work, providing both individual sessions, and small group experiences with up to four people. The group setting not only reduces costs but also creates a supportive community environment where participants can share insights from their journey. This approach allows more people to benefit from KAP while maintaining the high quality of care and personal attention that's essential for this deep work.

*KAP should always be conducted under appropriate mental health supervision. Hugh Ransley is a Person Centered Therapist specializing in individual psychotherapy with adults and Ketamine Assisted Psychotherapy. He has been a practicing psychotherapist for over 18 years. Learn more on his website, integrated-counselinga2.com or give Ransley a call at (734) 556-6316.*

# The Crazy Wisdom Calendar

## Death and Dying continued...

**Ann Arbor Death Cafe In-Person Meeting with Merilynne Rush • Saturday, September 20, October 18, November 15, and December 20 • 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.** • Conversation about all things related to death and dying. Small and large group discussion, deep listening, and sharing from the heart. No agenda, no presentation. Coffee, tea, and snacks available. Open to all adults. Accessible, confidential. Please note: This is not a grief support group. FREE. For more information contact Merilynne at (734) 395-9660, email thedyingyear@gmail.com, visit thedyingyear.org or DeathCafe.com.

**Advance Care Planning Facilitator Training with Merilynne Rush • Tuesday, November 11 • 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.** • Learn how to assist healthy adults identify a healthcare advocate and discuss their values and wishes with them. For nurses, doctors, social workers, chaplains, administrators, end-of-life doulas, and all healthcare professionals across the continuum of care. Advance registration required; held on Zoom. $265. For more information contact Merilynne at (734) 395-9660, email thedyingyear@gmail.com, or visit thedyingyear.org.

## Drumming

**Drummunity Circles with Lori Fithian • Saturdays, September 20, October 18, November 15, & December 20 • 7 to 8:30 p.m.** • Come join the Drummunity! All ages, all levels welcome. Drums and percussion instruments provided or bring your own. Rhythmic Fun for the whole --with a focus on community-building. Rhythm games, singing, dancing, and improvising will bring us together! A $5 donation for the center is most welcome. For more information contact Lori at (734) 426-7818, email lorifithian@mac.com, or visit interfaithspirit.org.

## Energy and Healing

**Gentle Qigong with Rory Walsh • Saturday, September 6, 13, 20, & 27, October 11, 18, & 25, November 1, 8, 15, & 22 • 11 to 11:45 a.m.** • Join us for a harmonizing flow of head-to-toe movement, meditation, and self-acupressure to help you center and navigate the changing seasons. It is a fun and invigorating self-care practice for all ages and experience levels. $15 drop-in, $95 for full term of seven classes. For more information Contact Rory at info@momentuscoaching.com or visit momentuscoaching.com.

**Healing through Connecting Constelallations™ Sacred Saturday Workshop with Michaelene Ruhl • Saturday, September 6, October 11, & December 6 • 1 to 6:00 p.m.** • Join us in a sacred, compassionate space to reconnect with yourself, ancestors, and others. Through family and systemic constellations, experience healing, insight, and peace—simply by being present. No judgment, just love. $185. For more information contact Michaelene at (248) 345-3557, email michaelene@constellationhealingarts.com, or visit constellationhealingarts.com.

**Light Therapy Basics with Paula Neys • Tuesday, October 7 OR November 4 • 10:30 a.m. to Noon** • You know how you feel better when you get a little sunshine? Light heals us because it's an essential nutrient. This basic light therapy (commonly known as red light therapy) will give you foundational skills to elevate your health, the health of your family, friends, and pets. Class is limited to five participants. $15. For more information contact Paula at pneys@icloud.com.

**Trance Development and Healing with Chris Ratter • Saturday, September 13 & Sunday, September 14 • 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.** • Two-Day Trance Development and Healing Workshop—Welcoming all levels!! Covering: sitting in the power, trance blending, Trance healing, and trance communication. $350. Located at The Hampton Inn Commerce Novi, 169 Loop Rd., Commerce Township, MI 48390. For more information contact Anat at (248) 982-1203, email trad.em.heal@gmail.com, or visit trad-em.com.

**MariEl Energy Work Training with Mary Light • Saturday, October 11, November 8, & December 13 • 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.** • This is a three-day training with assignments in between the monthly meets. MariEl is a bodywork session designed to facilitate release of trauma in a gentle yet effective manner, often through a series of sessions. $800 with a $300 deposit. For more information visit naturopathicschoolofannarbor.net.

**Healing & Ascension Monthlies Series with Rev. Eve Wilson • Thursday, December 18 • 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.** • Every four weeks for two hours Eve Wilson, Master Healer/World Healing & Ascension Worker guides and empowers 40+ people into the new world experience. Once there, we work to heal and ascend our human selves and the world we live in. We work by phone conference call, so each of us can be focused on our own work and not distracted by others. $300 Series; pay as you go or sliding scale options. For more information contact Eve at (734) 780-7635, email evew@spiritualhealers.com, or visit spiritualhealers.com.

## Exercise and fitness

**Total Body Strength and Balance with Jackie Farah • Monday, September 1, 8, 15, 22, & 29, October 6, 13, 20, & 27, November 3, 10, 17, & 24, December 1, 8, 15, 22, & 29 • 9 to 10:00 a.m.** • Total Body Strength and Balance is a fusion class drawing on elements of strength and circuit training, cardio, core balance, Pilates, and barre. Instructors offer their classes a workout covering every major muscle group, moving from weightlifting and balance to abdominal and lower body work. $26 or Class Package available. For more information contact Imagine Fitness and Yoga at (734) 622-8119, email imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com, or visit imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

**Fundamentals of Pilates and Stretching for Back Care with Sara Atwell • Monday, September 1, 8, 15, 22, & 29, October 6, 13, 20, & 27, November 3, 10, 17, & 24, December 1, 8, 15, 22, & 29 • 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.** • If you are new to Pilates this is your class. Pilates is a series of exercises designed to strengthen the core including back shoulders and hips. The exercises will be broken down to support new movers and those that want to review technique and Pilates principles. Focus will be on gradual strength, flexibility, and stability. $26 or Class Package available. For more information contact Imagine Fitness and Yoga at (734) 622-8119, email imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com, or visit imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

**Cardio Plus with Jackie Farah • Monday, September 1, 8, 15, 22, & 29, October 6, 13, 20, & 27, November 3, 10, 17, & 24, December 1, 8, 15, 22, & 29 • 10 to 11:00 a.m.** • Cardio combined with total body strength training. This fun class will use different equipment to strengthen all muscle groups, improve balance, and keep your heart rate up. Emphasis is placed on proper form while safely increasing muscular strength, improving core stability, and cardiovascular fitness. All experience and fitness levels welcome. $26 or Class Package available. For more information contact Imagine Fitness and Yoga at (734) 622-8119, email imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com, or visit imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

**Build and Tone Your Upper Body & Stability with Jackie Farah • Tuesday, September 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30, October 7, 14, 21, & 28, November 4, 11, 18, & 25, December 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30 • 9 to 10:00 a.m.** • Target all major muscles. We utilize a mix of free weights, resistance bands, med balls, stability balls and BOSU balls. It is suited for everyone to a beginner to a fitness fanatic. Resistance training does more than just make your muscles stronger—it can also boost your metabolism, improve your posture and mood, and much more. $26 or Class Package available. For more information contact Imagine Fitness and Yoga at (734) 622-8119, email imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com, or visit imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

**Demo Rinpoche has served as the Resident Spiritual Director at Jewel Heart since 2018. At age five, he entered Drepung Loseling Monastery in Mundgod. He officially joined the monastery in 1987 where he spent nearly thirty years of uninterrupted education in meditation, debate, memorization, philosophy, and composition under the Dalai Lama's direct supervision.**

**You can read an in-depth feature and interview with Rinpoche in our archives at issuu.com/cwcommunityjournal/docs/issue_78_final.**

**Rinpoche will be hosted by Crazy Wisdom for a public Q&A led by Bill Zirinsky of Crazy Wisdom, on Wednesday, October 22, at 7:00 p.m. in the Celestial Lounge, Upstairs at Crazy Wisdom.**

**For more information about the Q&A session, see the ad on page 9, or the event listing in the calendar on page 80 under the heading Buddhism.**

# The Crazy Wisdom Calendar

**Balance, Flexibility, & Core Strength with John Farah • Tuesday, September 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30, October 7, 14, 21, & 28, November 4, 11, 18, & 25, December 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30 • 2 to 3:00 p.m.** • A total body workout with a focus on strengthening the core and balance. You will improve overall balance, posture, muscle tone, and mobility as you learn to move the body to help avoid injury and strengthen your balance. $26 or Class Package available. For more information contact Imagine Fitness and Yoga at (734) 622-8119, email imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com, or visit imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

**Cardio Plus with Lisa Camfield • Tuesday, September 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30, October 7, 14, 21, & 28, November 4, 11, 18, & 25, December 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30 • 6 to 7:00 p.m.** • Cardio combined with total body strength training. This fun class will use different equipment to strengthen all muscle groups, improve balance, and keep your heart rate up. Emphasis is placed on proper form while safely increasing muscular strength, improving core stability, and cardiovascular fitness. All experience and fitness levels welcome. $26 or Class Package available. For more information contact Imagine Fitness and Yoga at (734) 622-8119, email imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com, or visit imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

**Balance, Flexibility, & Core Strength with John Farah • Wednesday, September 3, 10, 17, & 24, October 1, 8, 15, 22, & 29, November 5, 12, 19, & 26, December 3, 10, 17, 24, & 31 • 9 to 10:00 a.m.** • A total body workout with a focus on strengthening the core and balance. You will improve overall balance, posture, muscle tone and mobility as you learn to move the body to help avoid injury and strengthen your balance. $26 or Class Package available. For more information contact Imagine Fitness and Yoga at (734) 622-8119, email imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com, or visit imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

**Cardio & Core Fusion with Jill Goldstein • Thursday, September 4, 11, 18, & 25, October 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30, November 6, 13, 20, & 27, December 4 • 9 to 9:50 a.m.** • Step into Cardio & Core Fusion, a dynamic fitness class that seamlessly blends low-impact cardio with strength training and mat exercises, designed for all levels of fitness. Whether you're just starting your fitness journey or are an experienced enthusiast, this class adapts to your pace and abilities. $26 or Class Package available. For more information contact Imagine Fitness and Yoga at (734) 622-8119, email imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com, or visit imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

**Total Body Strength with Lisa Camfield • Thursday, September 4, 11, 18, & 25, October 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30, November 6, 13, 20, & 27, December 4 • 6 to 7:00 p.m.** • Increase your strength, improve your balance and stability, and have fun. This class uses different equipment to strengthen all muscle groups with an emphasis on core strength and stability. All experience and fitness levels welcome. $26 or Class Package available. For more information contact Imagine Fitness and Yoga at (734) 622-8119, email imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com, or visit imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

**Mat Pilates with Sarah Atfield • Friday, September 5, 12, 19, & 26, October 3, 10, 17, 24, & 31, November 7, 14, 21, & 28, December 5, 12, 19, & 26 • 9 to 10:00 a.m.** • Pilates involves a series of precise movements to strengthen your core muscles while making you more flexible. Pilates enhances posture, muscle tone, and joint mobility without high impact, flexibility, balance, coordination, concentration and is a great way to relieve stress. $26 or Class Package available. For more information contact Imagine Fitness and Yoga at (734) 622-8119, email imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com, or visit imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

**Cycle and Strength with Jackie Farah • Sunday, Sept 7, 14, 21, & 28, October 5, 12, 19, & 26, November 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30, December 7, 14, 21, & 28 • 8:30 to 9:30 a.m.•** Improve your cardiovascular fitness as you progress through a class challenging you with increased endurance and strength rides. Hop off the bike and get work on targeted muscle groups to tone and strengthen. For more information contact Imagine Fitness and Yoga at (734) 622-8119, email imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com, or visit imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

**Free Try-It Cardio Kickboxing Class with Lynda Gronlund & Balance Point Fitness • Friday, September 12 • 7 to 7:45 p.m.** • Cardio Kickboxing is a fun cardio workout with professional heavy kick / punch bags and music. Some loaner gloves available; bring your own if you have some. No experience is needed. Age 16+. All fitness levels are welcome. FREE. For more information contact Lynda at (248) 739-0841, email balancepoint.fitness@gmail.com, or visit balancepointfitnessa2.com.

**Active Against ALS Rivalry Ride with Gayle Rosen • Sunday, September 14 • 7:30 a.m.** • Join Active Against ALS on September 14, 2025 for our 14th Annual Rivalry Bike Ride between Spartan Stadium in East Lansing and the Big House in Ann Arbor. We will transport riders and their bicycles from Ann Arbor to East Lansing to ride a metric century back to Michigan Stadium. A HALF STADIUM ride is also available. Transportation, SAG wagon support, lunch, and cider and donuts from Dexter Cider Mill will be provided. Please see our website ActiveAgainstALS.org for more details and to register. All proceeds will benefit ALS research. $35 - $80. Ride takes you from East Lansing to Ann Arbor. For more information contact a2a3rivalryride@gmail.com or visit activeagainstals.org/rivalryride.html.

## festivals and fairs

**The Healing Feast: Food and Community for Healing Connections • Thursday, September 4 • 5:30 p.m.** The Healing Feast is a monthly event that offers food and community for healing connections with self, others, the earth, and the sacred. The September gathering is outdoors with the theme of Wild Abundance, featuring aerial dance from Cassie Catania and music from Jordan Hamilton. Dinner includes salads and appetizers from Michigan, Mexico, Bolivia,

and Perú. 10% of all proceeds will be donated to Growing Hope. Other feasts at regional areas on October, 5, November1, and December 7. Sliding scale and free tickets are available in advance at bit.ly/the-healing-feast-september2025. Doors at 5:00 PM, event starts at 5:30 sharp.To be notified of future feasts join the email list at saribrownmusic.com/the-healing-feast/#hf-email-list.

**5th Annual Entheofest with Students Association of Psychedelic Studies (SAPS) & Students for Sensible Drug Policy • Sunday, September 21 • 1:11 to 4:00 p.m.** • The 5th Annual Entheofest is a free student run free-speech celebration of plant medicines, mushrooms, and other natural substances. This year we are welcoming William Leonard Pickard as our keynote speaker. After the event concludes, the afterparty begins across town at Rabbit Hole.The afterparty (4:30 to 11:00 p.m.) will have live music from Raising the Dead, along with dancing, art, vendors, and other fun activities. FREE. For more information contact Jim Salame at (734) 355-0136.

**Mystic Market with Chandra Mitchel • Saturday, October 11 • Noon to 9:00 p.m.** • Step into the magic! Join us for Crazy Wisdom's 1st annual Mystic Market! This day-long celebration brings together handmade local art, unique vendors, bodyworkers, and local intuitives and tarot card readers—all in one spot. Prepare to immerse yourself in the creative and healing spirit of our local community! Come curious. Leave enchanted! Interested in vending? Email Chandra to apply. For more information contact Chandra at chandra@crazywisdombookstore.com.

**Active Against ALS Uncork a Cure • Thursday, October 16 • 6 to 9:00 p.m.** • Please join us on October 16, 2025 from 6-9pm for our 3rd Annual Uncork a Cure for ALS. Enjoy an evening of food, drink, and entertainment while participating in our Online Auction. The event will be held at York Food & Drink in Ann Arbor. If you are unable to attend, please consider making a donation, becoming a sponsor, or make a donation to our auction. Visit our website at ActiveAgainstALS.org for more information or to register.

**Enlightened Soul Holistic Psychic Fair with Enlightened Soul Center & Shop • Ongoing 1st and 3rd Saturdays • Noon to 6:00 p.m.** • Join us for a fun-filled day at the Enlightened Soul Center! We have a selection of readers and healers for your enjoyment, along with visiting vendors for shopping! A great way to explore lots of readings and healings at one time, under one roof. Energy healers, shopping, snacks, and parking. $5. For more information visit enlightenedsoulcenter.com.

## Film

**Free Film & Discussion with Jewel Heart instructors • Friday, September 12, October 3, November 14, & December 12 • 7 to 9:15 p.m. •** September 12— *The Best Bad Thing*,1997. This is the story of a twelve-year-old named "Rinko Tsujimura" who is sent from her parents' California home for a character-building stay on her aunt's rural farm.

- October 10— *Flow*, 2024. A solitary cat, displaced by a great flood, finds refuge on a boat with various species who must navigate the challenges of adapting to a transformed world together.

- November 14— *One Night with the King*, 2006. The moving biblical tale of Esther, a humble Jewish girl, who saves her people from annihilation and wins the heart of the handsome Persian king Xerxes. A lush ode to one of the Old Testament's most inspiring women.

- December 12—*Resurrection*, 2016. The story of a woman who survives the car accident that kills her husband. Discovering that she has the power to heal other people, she becomes an unwitting celebrity, the hope of those in desperate need of healing, and a lightning rod for religious beliefs and skeptics.

FREE, donations welcome. Concessions available. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

## Food and Nutrition

**Nutritionars(TM) & info-nars on Need-to-Know 21st Century Bioscience Key to Wellness Fall Seminar Series • Held Online and at To-Be-determined Venues • Typically 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.** • Learn about the role pomegranate ingestion could have in mitigating Alzheimer's disease; about the science underpinning the purported benefits in the body obtained from ingesting certain foods/herbs/spices (cloves, cucumbers, cinnamon, etc.) $12 ea for groups of 3. $28 minimum for a solo session. For more information including current Nutritionar offerings please email ChE4theEarth@gmail.com.

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# The Crazy Wisdom Calendar

## Healing

**Kidulting Makeover with Debra Metler • Saturdays, September 13, 20, & 27, October 11, 18, & 25, November 1, 8, 15, & 22, December 6 & 13 • 11:00 a.m. to Noon** • Are you feeling old and cranky? Have you lost your youthful energy? You might need a Kidulting Makeover on Zoom. Feel young at any age! Have a lot of fun! Experience better health, less stress, and increased creativity. Bring your friends. Minimum of 3 required. $20/person. For more information contact Debra at (248) 819-2131, email debmetler@gmail.com, or visit guffaw.square.site.

## Herbal Medicine

**Class Visits to Herbal Medicine Class with Mary Light • Ongoing Saturdays • Times TBD** • Mary has always welcomed prospective students to meet and see our studio, and ask any questions, receive literature, and apply. FREE. For more information contact Mary at (734) 769-7794.

**Identification of Edible & Medicinal Plants with Gabi May • Sundays, Exact Dates TBA • 4 to 5:30 p.m.** Come learn how to identify edible and medicinal plants and hear their indigenous uses and western medicine stories from a medicinal chemist's perspective! $10. For more information contact Gabi at (269) 271-8797, email gabriellemay103@gmail.com, or visit mysticmay.com.

**Herbal Medicine Class Meet and Greet with Mary Light • Saturday, September 20, October 18, & November 15 • 9:30 a.m.** • Each date is a different topic, held the 3rd Saturday of the month, no background necessary. Holistic bodywork, Hydrotherapy, nervous system balancing. These are great previews to our year-long certification series. Full day of natural medicine classes for $150; ½ hour of FREE observation. For more information contact Mary at (734) 769-7794.

**Herbal Medicine Certification Enrollment with Mary Light • Saturday, September 20, October 18, November 15, & December 6 • 11 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.** • These are times to visit, register, enroll, meet Mary and students, and prepare yourself to participate in the Medicinal Herbalist Certification Program which begins January 2026; enrollment deadline is December 6. RSVP required. FREE. For more information contact Mary at (734) 769-7794.

## Holistic Health

**Run for the Hills with Hidden Lake Gardens • Saturday, September 13 • 8:00 a.m.** • Join us for the 15th Annual Run for the Hills at Hidden Lake Gardens! Choose between a one mile walk or 5K run/walk along paved trails on the most scenic and hilliest course in Southeast Michigan. Don't miss this chance to enjoy a day of fitness and fun surrounded by nature's beauty! $35 Early Bird Pricing until August 15; $45 Late Registration starting August 16; $10 Children 14 and Younger. For more information contact Jessica at (517) 431-2060 or email jessicag@msu.edu.

**Steiner Health Fasting for your Health Weekend with Steiner Health • Friday, September 19 through Sunday, September 21** • A simple fast can reset the mind, body, and immune system and leave you feeling more energetic and better prepared to fend off illness. The fasting weekend is an educational weekend that takes place on zoom. The program does not involve doctor visits. The program is offered on a sliding scale from $75 - $150 to enable those who cannot afford the $120 cost of the weekend to attend. For more information contact Dr. McMullen-Laird at (734) 222-1491, email rshc@steinerhealth.org, or visit steinerhealth.org.

**Steiner Health Two Week Life Force Intensive Health Retreat with Dr. Molly McMullen-Laird, MD and Dr. Quentin McMullen, MD • Monday, October 20 through Saturday, November 1** • This two-week intensive session is designed for ambulatory individuals with a variety of ailments, chronic illness, or anyone seeking a restorative regimen. $5300-$7200. For more information contact Steiner Health at (734)663-4365 or visit steinerhealth.org.

**Sari Brown** is a priestess of song, facilitator of sacred space, chef and hostess of a community experience called The Healing Feast. She started The Healing Feast in October 2024 to create a nurturing space for healing connections with self, others, the earth, and the sacred and to practice radical abundance and creative community with people from diverse backgrounds, perspectives, beliefs, and cultures. Each event is unique, offering delicious global-inspired food and incorporating dialogue, music, movement, meditation, poetry, circle dances, chants, and other embodied practices of aliveness.

Brown is also a singer/songwriter and a long-time member of Earthwork Music collective. She is an ordained minister in the United Methodist Church and served in local congregations from 2016-2023. In the past two years, she has lived out her calling through The Healing Feast, guest speaking/preaching, grief rituals, embodied spirituality retreats, and life coaching. She offers coaching on a completely open sliding scale (no amount is too small) as she completes her coach training.

Brown received her BA in Anthropology and Religion from Marlboro College and her M.Div from Candler School of Theology at Emory University. She has lived and worked in Bolivia, Perú, Colombia, and Brazil. She is also connected to Mexican culture through her husband, Marcelo, and their three-year-old son. She draws on this extensive multicultural experience as she creates food, music, and community.

The Healing Feast rotates locations each month to different cities around Michigan, but it regularly occurs in the Ann Arbor area. On September 4th, The Healing Feast will take place in Ypsilanti at the gardens on Maplewood, featuring a theme of "Wild Abundance" with appetizers and salads spanning the Americas, aerial dance from Cassie Catania, and music from Jordan Hamilton. Get more information and reserve tickets in advance at bit.ly/the-healing-feast-september2025. See the Healing Feast event listing under the calendar heading Fairs and Festivals.

# HEALING FROM WITHIN:

## *The Transformative Power of The Emotion and Body Code*

**By Amanda Bate**

In today's world, emotional baggage and physical discomfort often leave us feeling disconnected from ourselves. Energy healing modalities provide an avenue for renewal. Among them, The Emotion Code and Body Code—developed by Dr. Bradley Nelson—offer a powerful approach to identifying and releasing emotional blockages. Using techniques such as muscle testing and direct communication with the subconscious, these methods help restore harmony to the mind, body, and soul. Learn more at discoverhealing.com/the-emotion-code.

**Understanding Energy Healing and Trapped Emotions**

Our bodies are not just physical entities, but dynamic energy systems. When functioning properly, this energy supports our overall health and vitality. However, unresolved emotions—pain, grief, fear—can become "trapped," disrupting the natural flow of energy and leading to physical discomfort or illness (The Emotion Code Book, Nelson, 2019). True healing is not just about treating symptoms but about restoring balance at an energetic level.

The Emotion Code focuses on identifying and releasing trapped emotions that hinder personal growth. The Body Code expands this approach, addressing a broader spectrum of imbalances such as energetic, body systems/circuits, pathogens, nutritional deficiencies, toxins, and structural misalignments. Both emphasize that addressing energetic disruptions can lead to profound shifts in well-being.

The subconscious mind is a vast reservoir of memories, emotions, and learned patterns, many of which continue to influence our well-being long after the triggering event has passed.

**The Role of Muscle Testing in Energy Healing**

A cornerstone of Dr. Nelson's approach is muscle testing, also known as applied kinesiology. This simple yet effective technique allows practitioners to communicate directly with the subconscious mind, uncovering energetic imbalances that might otherwise remain unnoticed. During muscle testing, the body's response to specific stimuli—whether physical substances or thought patterns—reveals hidden blockages (The Emotion Code Book, Nelson, 2019). When tension and negative energy accumulate over time, they manifest physically, whether as chronic pain, fatigue, or even more serious conditions.

The subconscious mind is a vast reservoir of memories, emotions, and learned patterns, many of which continue to influence our well-being long after the triggering event has passed. Through muscle testing, the subconscious bypasses the conscious mind to respond directly to yes or no questions, offering valuable insight without the influence of analytical thought. This method enables practitioners to identify and address emotional blockages and bodily imbalances with remarkable precision. Clients often receive detailed information, such as the specific age at which an emotion was trapped or the hierarchy of imbalances contributing to their symptoms, creating a more profound and tailored healing experience.

Immediately following an Emotion Code or Body Code session, clients often describe a profound sense of lightness, as though a weight has been lifted. Over the next one to three days, as the body processes and integrates the released energy, physical symptoms begin to ease. Many experience moments of astonishment as their subconscious reveals insights that only they could have known, deepening their trust in the process.

**The Comprehensive Approach of the Body Code System**

The Body Code builds upon The Emotion Code by addressing six primary imbalances: structural misalignment, nutritional, toxins, pathogens, energetic, and nutritional/lifestyle. This broader framework allows practitioners to detect deeper disruptions beyond emotional trauma. Refer to drbradleynelson.com/body-code-system/.

For example, chronic physical pain might stem not only from trapped emotions but also from misalignments or nutritional deficiencies. The Body Code systematically guides practitioners to resolve such factors, creating lasting improvements in health.

A surprising yet lighthearted example comes from a woman who frequently experienced painful charley horses after leaving the gym. Most would assume the issue stemmed from a potassium deficiency or dehydration. However, through The Body Code, her subconscious revealed that the real culprit was an energetic intolerance to her fitness instructor. Consciously, she liked her instructor and was caught off guard by this revelation. Yet, once the energetic imbalance was identified and released, she continued her workouts as usual and never suffered another charley horse again.

**Everyday Applications of The Emotion and Body Code**

Life's challenges—stress, heartbreak, exhaustion—accumulate as emotional weight, affecting both mental clarity and physical well-being. The Emotion Code and Body Code offer practical tools for ongoing self-care, allowing individuals to continuously release energetic imbalances (The Emotion Code Book, Nelson, 2019).

For instance, someone experiencing chronic anxiety may find that muscle testing reveals a past emotional trauma contributing to their unease. By energetically clearing this trapped emotion, relief often follows, leading to enhanced mental and physical well-being.

One client described their first Emotion Code session as "equivalent to months of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy." They shared: "Though everyone's experience is unique, I am truly grateful for the profound sense of peace I felt afterward, along with a closure I hadn't realized I needed."

Healing is a deeply personal journey, requiring self-awareness, courage, and compassion. The Emotion Code and Body Code empower individuals to take ownership of their healing process, enabling them to release burdens that no longer serve them.

These methods do not promise instant miracles, but they offer a transformative path toward self-discovery and balance. By integrating muscle testing, emotional release techniques, and a holistic approach, The Emotion Code and Body Code allow individuals to reclaim vitality and embrace a new way of living.

In a world of constant demands, The Emotion Code and Body Code provide a framework for reconnecting with the self and achieving deeper healing. Dr. Bradley Nelson's pioneering work illuminates the path to emotional freedom, reminding us that wellness extends beyond physical health—it encompasses emotional and energetic harmony.

The healing process is not linear, but each step toward releasing past pain creates space for a brighter, more fulfilling future. It is important to set realistic expectations: while one session can initiate significant energetic shifts, the body can only release a certain amount at a time. For lasting and comprehensive healing, multiple sessions are highly recommended.

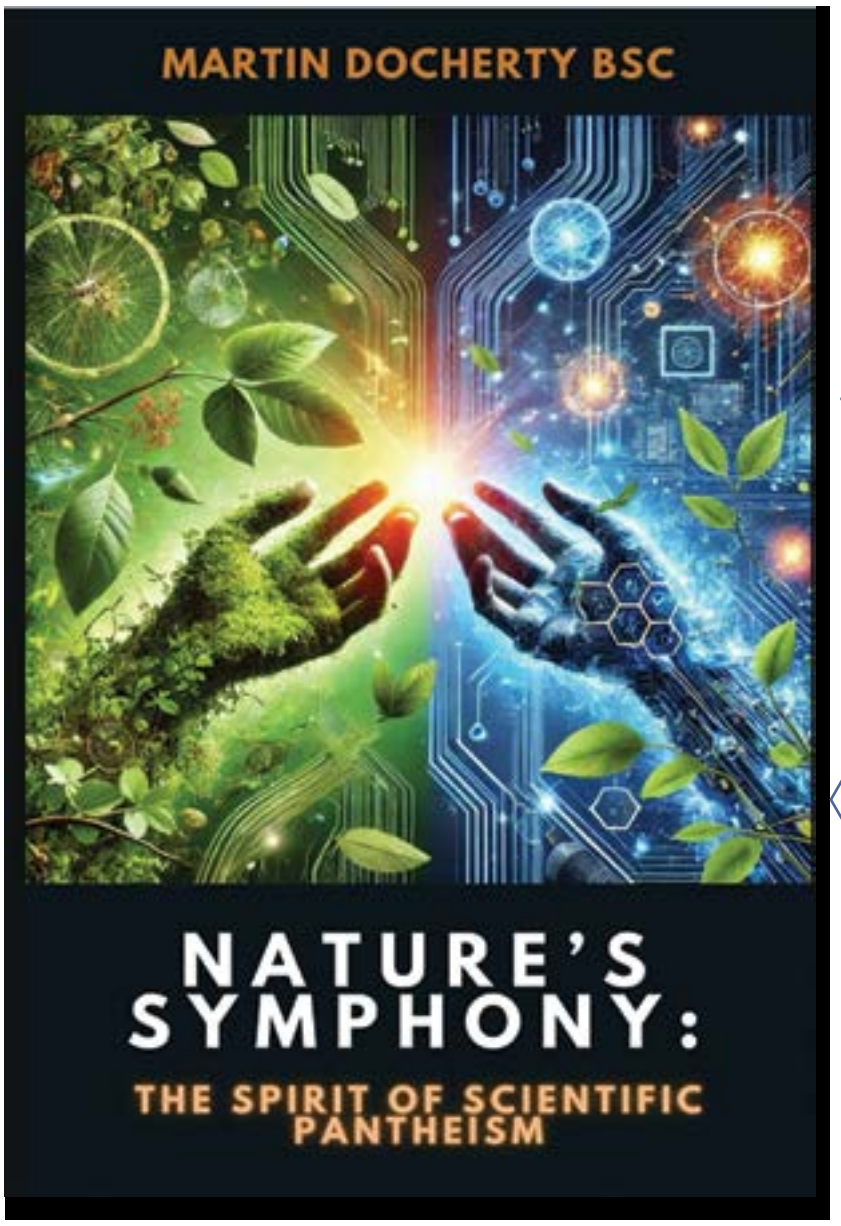
*Amanda Bate is a certified Emotion and Body Code practitioner and Level 1 Medical Qigong practitioner dedicated to helping others release emotional and energetic burdens that weigh on the heart, mind, body, and soul. She offers both virtual Zoom sessions and in-person sessions at the Virgo Room in Fenton, MI. To learn more about Bate's practice, or schedule a discovery call visit her online at heal.me/bateconsultingllc or email bateconsultingllc@gmail.com.*

Book Review

# Nature's Symphony: The Spirit of Scientific Pantheism

## by Martin Docherty

By Christine MacIntyre




In *Nature's Symphony*, Martin Docherty presents a refreshing and deeply thoughtful perspective on our relationship with the natural world—one that blends science, philosophy, and spirituality in a way that feels both intellectually satisfying and emotionally grounding. This book is neither your typical science read nor a standard spiritual guide. It's something more layered: a meditation on the sacredness of the universe, grounded not in supernatural beliefs, but in the elegant truths of science itself.

Docherty introduces readers to the philosophy of scientific pantheism, the belief that the universe is divine—not because a deity created it, but because it *is* the divine. In other words, matter, energy, and space-time aren't just physical facts; they're also spiritual realities. This isn't a new idea, and Docherty acknowledges the roots of his thinking in figures like Spinoza, Einstein, and Carl Sagan. What makes the book compelling is how he takes these significant, sometimes abstract concepts, and makes them feel personal, relevant, and beautifully real.

One of the book's strongest qualities is Docherty's writing style. His tone is both precise and poetic, balancing the clarity of a scientist with the wonder of a mystic. He has a gift for examining small, often-overlooked details of the natural world—a hummingbird frozen mid-flight, the structure of a leaf, or the ancient rhythm of ocean tides—and then pulling back to show how these are all part of a much larger, interconnected system. These beautiful descriptions serve as metaphors for a greater truth: that everything is connected, and that connection is, in itself, sacred.

***In Nature's Symphony, Martin Docherty presents a refreshing and deeply thoughtful perspective on our relationship with the natural world—one that blends science, philosophy, and spirituality in a way that feels both intellectually satisfying and emotionally grounding.***

Docherty doesn't push belief or demand agreement. Instead, he invites curiosity. There's no agenda here—just an open-handed offering of a worldview that allows science and spirituality to coexist without contradiction. For readers who have felt spiritual longings but never felt at home in organized religion, this book provides a safe and intellectually honest space to explore. It respects reason, but it also honors mystery. In that way, it feels particularly timely.

*Nature's Symphony* is ideal for readers who find themselves somewhere between science and spirit—individuals who seek a connection to something greater while also valuing critical thinking and evidence-based understanding. Docherty suggests various perspectives, some contradictory and controversial, encouraging readers to consider all viewpoints. For instance, how religious pluralism can help inform scientific pantheism and vice versa. We see another example of this in his discussion on the origin of the universe. "The big bang theory is not the only theory," he wrote, adding that "there are some alternatives that challenge or change some aspects…."

In this way, he presents other viewpoints while also explaining their significance, potential misconceptions, and their relation to scientific pantheism. He urges readers, "By staying open to new ideas and being willing to revise our beliefs considering additional evidence, we can develop a more nuanced and accurate understanding of the world."

***Docherty introduces readers to the philosophy of scientific pantheism, the belief that the universe is divine—not because a deity created it, but because it is the divine.***

What's also notable is how well this book resonates with readers interested in holistic living, sustainability, and mindfulness—not just as trendy lifestyle choices but as profound and intentional ways of existing in harmony with the world. Docherty argues that if the universe is sacred, then so is our responsibility to care for it. That message resonates on both a personal and ecological level. Taking a walk in the woods or reducing your carbon footprint are good practices, but they're also meaningful, almost spiritual acts in a worldview where everything is part of one grand symphony.

Intertwined in lyrical prose and gentle musings, some chapters delve into complex topics such as thermodynamics, entropy, evolution, and metaphysics. Docherty handles these areas well, with clear explanations and thoughtful commentary, but they do require some focus and willingness to sit with complex ideas. That said, even in these more academic sections, his tone remains welcoming and grounded. You don't have to be a physicist or philosopher to follow along—but you do have to be willing to think deeply.

There's a quiet sanguinity throughout, a belief in the beauty and coherence of the universe. Docherty expertly balances scientific accuracy with a touch of novelty, making the read both informative and captivating. It's a difficult feat for authors, and it's what makes *Nature's Symphony* stand out.

This book will capture the interest of scientists and spiritual seekers alike, highlighting how scientific pantheism sparks wonder for the cosmos and respect for life on Earth. *Nature's Symphony* isn't a quick read, but it brings depth to the mundane. As Docherty says, "[Scientific pantheism] promotes a sense of wonder for the cosmos and a deep respect for life on Earth. By embracing this worldview, we can find meaning and purpose in our connection to the universe and the natural world."

***Nature's Symphony is ideal for readers who find themselves somewhere between science and spirit—individuals who seek a connection to something greater while also valuing critical thinking and evidence-based understanding.***

# The Crazy Wisdom Calendar

## Holistic Health

**Reawakening the Mind-Body-Mother Earth Connection with Robin Lily Goldberg • Monday, October 27, November 3 & 10 • 6 to 7:00 p.m. •** This experiential series explores our vastness and interconnectedness. From reflexology to polyvagal theory, we'll rediscover how inner networks like the nervous system communicate with the natural world. By tracing our ties to the Earth, we can remember our wholeness and revive our sense of belonging. $45. For more information contact Robin at robinlily@outlook.com.

## Intuitive and Psychic Development

**Psychic Psychology Women's Group Meditation: Teleconference with John Friedlander & Gloria Hemsher • Tuesday, September 1, October 7, November 4, & December 2 • 7 to 8:00 p.m. •** For women only; meditations concentrating on women's issues relative to biological energies and the aura. $10. For more information contact Violeta at 734-476-1513 or visit psychicpsychology.org.

**Focused Mind Meditation: Teleconference with John Friedlander • Sunday, September 7, October 5, November 2, & December 7 • 9 a.m. to Noon •** Development of sustained focused meditation makes it easy to develop a whole new magnitude of psychic skill and healing, as well as a new level mental clarity and spiritual openness. $15. For more information contact Violeta at 734-476-1513 or visit psychicpsychology.org.

**October Intensive: Webinar & Teleconference with John Friedlander • Saturday, October 11 through Sunday, October 19 • Weekends from 10:00 a.m. to Noon AND 2 to 4:00 p.m., Weekdays from 7 to 9:00 p.m. •** Deep sustained meditation and training, spending considerable time on each of the seven major chakras from a clairvoyant technical perspective. Continued study of information presented in previous intensives. $275. For more information contact Gilbert at gchoud@yahoolcom or visit psychicpsychology.org.

## Massage

**Irene's Open House with Irene's Myomassology Institute • Friday, September 12 • 3 to 7:00 p.m. •** Get a feel for Irene's Campus at our Massage School open house! Come check out our massage program and see our classrooms. Let us show you around, talk with our teachers, graduates, and let us answer your questions. Enjoy classes and find out about the many massage therapy career options available. FREE. For more information contact the Institute at contact@irenes.edu or visit irenes.edu.

**Public Massage Class with Irene's Myomassology Institute • Friday, September 12 OR October 24 • 7 to 9:00 p.m. •** During this two-hour class, you will be able to learn basic techniques while giving and receiving a massage. This is an excellent opportunity for those interested in massage as a hobby or an introduction to massage as a career possibility. This popular class fills up fast. Reserve your spot now! $10. For more information contact the Institute at contact@irenes.edu or visit irenes.edu.

**Foot Reflexology Certification Class with Mary Light • Saturday, September 20 • 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 a.m. •** 4 spaces left in a smaller class of 10. You will be practicing and experiencing this relaxing and holistic method by the end of the day! 175$, All materials provided. Register by Sept 1. For more information contact Mary at (734) 769-7794.

## Meditation

**Weekly Silent Meditation Practice with Celeste Zygmont • Ongoing Sundays from 11:00a.m. to Noon AND/OR Ongoing Tuesdays from 9 to 9:30 a.m. •** This offering is open to all with a willingness to observe the self, kindly and rest in pure awareness. We begin with brief chanting, followed by silent Vipassana meditation. After the bell rings, you may leave or stay to share or ask questions. This is not a class or guided meditation—simply shared practice. Donation based. For more information contact the Deep Spring Center at (734) 477-5848, email om@deepspring.org, or visit deepspring.org.

**A Day of Mindfulness Meditation with Esther Kennedy • Saturday, September 6; October 4; November 1; December 6 • 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. •** Join our mindfulness community as we deepen our understanding of and commitment to daily meditation practice. Reflecting upon our relationships with honesty and courage, we amplify our capacity to be love within family, neighborhood, city, and world. $35.00 (Lunch included). For more information contact the Weber Center at (517)-266-4000 or visit webercenter.org.

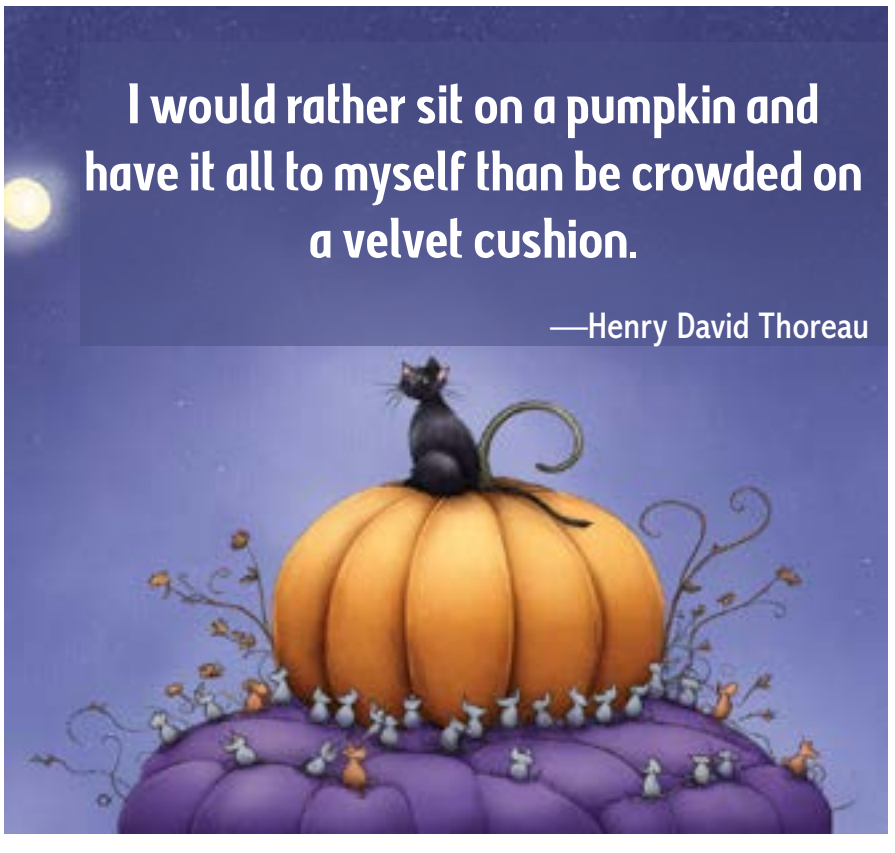
**How to Recognize an Enlightened Being with Professor Roger Jackson • Saturday, September 6 • 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. •** This workshop draws on both premodern and contemporary Buddhist writings to try to get a sense of traditional Buddhist perspectives on enlightened beings and enlightened states and how to recognize them. It considers the ways in which we might think about Buddhism's ultimate attainment from the perspective of our "disenchanted" century. Cost to be determined. Pay what you can. No one is turned away. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

**Meditation on Serenity & Compassion with Khenpo Tshering Chophel • Saturday, September 6, 13, 20, & 27, October 4, 11, 18, & 25, November 8, 15, 22, & 29, December 6, 13, 20, & 27 • 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.** Meditation on compassion starts with serenity then opens our hearts to genuine caring for all beings. Recognizing that everyone shares the wish to be happy and free from suffering, we practice broadening our focus beyond our own wellbeing. Ongoing; participants can attend whenever they wish; no prior meditation experience necessary. FREE, donations accepted. For more information contact Lama Nancy at (734) 649-2127, email lamanancy@karunabuddhistcenter.org, or visit karunabuddhistcenter.org.

**White Tara Guided Healing Meditation with Jewel Heart Instructors • Sunday, Sept 7, 14, 21, & 28; October 5, 12, 19, & 26, November 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30, December 7, 14, 21, & 28 • 9:30 to 10:35 a.m. •** Tara is the mother goddess of Tibetan Buddhism, known for her quick and compassionate activity. White Tara is particularly associated with healing and long life. These guided meditations use visualization techniques to overcome physical, mental, and emotional suffering. FREE, donations welcome. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

**Healing and Compassion Meditations with Hartmut Sagolla • Monday, September 8, 15, 22, & 29, October 13, 20, & 27, November 3, 10, 17, & 24, December 1, 8, 15, & 22 • Noon to 1:00 p.m. •** Hartmut Sagolla leads a 30 to40 minute guided meditation on a Buddhist theme followed by discussion. Meditations are centered around healing oneself and others and developing compassion. They include concentrated meditation, visualization, and contemplative meditations. FREE. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

**Meditation with Jadal Tulku Lobsang Sherap • Tuesday, September 9, 16, & 23, 30, October 7, 14, 21, & 28, November 4, 11, 18, & 25, December 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30 • 6 to 6:45 p.m. •** Join Jadal Tulku's weekly meditation sessions focused on becoming more aware of your thoughts, feelings, and sensations, opening the door to understanding the nature of your mind and how it influences your experiences. A wonderful opportunity to learn and practice concentrated and analytical meditations in a group setting. FREE, donations welcome. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.



# The Crazy Wisdom Calendar

## Meditation continued...

**Never-Ending Lamp of Liberation: A Lam Rim Master Class with Demo Rinpoche • Tuesday, September 9, 16, & 23, 30, October 7, 14, 21, & 28, November 4, 11, 18, & 25, December 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30 • 7 to 8:30 p.m.** • In Tibetan, Lam Rim means the Stages of the Path and concisely presents the Tibetan Buddhist path in logical steps that can be learned by the practitioner. With Rinpoche's special guidance, the Lam Rim can help us develop a stable mind committed to enlightenment. No charge for Jewel Heart members / $100 for non-members who are registering for the first time. Give what you can; no one is turned away. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

**Introductory Meditation Course with Ordained Meditation Teachers • Thursday, September 11, 18, & 25, October 2 & 9 OR October 16, 23, & 30, November 6 & 13 • 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.** • The viewpoint of Zen is that life lived fully in each moment is the end and purpose in itself, and not the means for something else. Held in the Temple's meditation hall, the course includes simple stretching exercises, work with the breath, meditation postures, concentration, and mindfulness practice. Cost is $160/$120 unwaged. For more information contact the Zen Buddhist Temple at (734) 761-6520 or email annarborzentemple@gmail.com.

**Overnight Beginner's Zen Retreat with Ordained Meditation Teachers • Friday, September 12 & 13 OR December 5 & 6 • 7:00 pm to Noon** • Held in the Temple's meditation hall, the course includes simple stretching exercises, work with the breath, meditation postures, concentration, and mindfulness practice. In addition to meditation instruction, the workshop includes overnight accommodation and a vegetarian breakfast. Cost is $160/$120 unwaged. For more information contact the Zen Buddhist Temple at (734) 761-6520 or email annarborzentemple@gmail.com.

**Appearing and Empty: The Dalai Lama's Revelation on the Prasangika View of Emptiness with Venerable Thubten Chodron • Saturday, September 20 • 1:30 to 3:00 p.m. AND 5 to 6:30 p.m.** • Venerable Chodron takes us through the Dalai Lama's teachings on Sautrantika, Yogacara, and Svatantrika views on the ultimate nature of reality and the Prasangikas' thorough responses to these, so that we gain the correct view of emptiness — the selflessness of both persons and phenomena. Online only; stream at your convenience. Cost to be determined. Pay what you can. No one is turned away. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

The heart of autumn must have broken here and poured its treasure upon the leaves.

— Charlotte Bates

**Mastering Meditation with Dr. Kapila Castoldi • Sunday, September 21, 28, & October 5 • 2 to 4:00 p.m.** • Introductory Meditation Series offered by the Sri Chinmoy Centre. Topics include concentration, relaxation, and breathing techniques; the role of music and mantras; exploring a meditative lifestyle; self-awareness through meditation. FREE. For more information contact Kapila at (734) 994-7114, email castoldi@oakland.edu, or visit meditationannarbor.com.

**Mindful Yoga & Meditation Workshop with Andrea Astley Dinsdale of Crysterra Wellness • Friday, October 17 • 7 to 8:30 p.m.** • Experience a calmer nervous system and overall sense of well-being with this mindful yoga practice paired with meditation. In this gentle workshop, we will combine yoga, mindfulness, and meditation with singing bowls to cultivate the many benefits associated with a mindful meditation practice. Suitable for all fitness and experience levels. $30/$35. For more information visit crysterrawellness.com.

**GOM Day of Meditation with Jewel Heart Instructors • Saturday, October 18 • 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.** • Meditation is an essential tool that helps develop peace, joy, concentration, and wisdom. The day includes practice sessions with light guidance. Instructors are available for assistance. Silence will be enjoyed throughout. Come when you can. FREE, donations welcome. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

## Multicultural Events

**Decolonizing Ukraine: How the Indigenous People of Crimea Remade Themselves after Russian Occupation with Dr. Greta Uehling • Thursday, September 18 • 6 to 8:00 p.m.** • Join us for a reading and discussion with author Dr. Greta Uehling on her new book *Decolonizing Ukraine*, which explores how the Indigenous people of Crimea are rebuilding their identity and community after Russian occupation. FREE. For more information contact the Coriolis Company at events@corioliscompany.com or visit corioliscompany.com.

## Music, Sound, and Voice

**Folk Song Jam Along with Lori Fithian & Jean Chorazyczewski • Tuesday, September 2 & November 4 AND Wednesday October 1 & December 3 • 6 to 7:30 p.m.** • Join us for a different type of sing along—we'llproject lyrics and chords on a screen so you can sing and play along! All singers and players (especially beginners) welcome—Guitar, Ukulele, etc. We sing a little bit of everything—songs by folks! Come Join us! FREE. For more information contact Lori at (734) 426-7818, email folksongjamalong@gmail.com, or visit facebook.com/folksongjamalong.

**Soundbath Meditation with Michelle Camilleri • Thursday, September 4, October 2, & November 6 • 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.** • Immerse yourself in the healing frequencies of 432hz chakra crystal singing bowls, gong, and various sound tools. Perfect time for self-care as you reboot your nervous system, enter into a deep meditative state, &andsurrender what no longer serves. $30. For more information contact Michelle at michelle.camilleri26@gmail.com.

**Singing for Comfort with Layla Ananda • Thursday, September 11, October 9, November 13, & December 11 • 7 to 8:15 p.m.** • We sing short, easy-to learn, comforting songs, many of which come from the Threshold Choir repertoire. You can sing along, lead a song for our friendly, welcoming group (usually a dozen people), or simply listen. FREE, donations accepted. For more information visit interfaithspirit.org or mattwatroba.net.

**Cafe 704 with Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth • Friday, September 13, October 11, November 8, & December 13 • 7 to 9:00 p.m.** • Live music in a smoke- and alcohol-free venue, in person or livestream on Zoom. Schedule as follows: PATH (Sep. 13), Paul Vornhagen & Aron Kaufman (Oct. 11), Emily & Sam Slomovits featuring music of Joni Mitchell (Nov. 8), Marlena Studer and Steve Ragsdale (Dec. 13). For more information visit interfaithspirit.org.

**Community Sound Bath with Rob Meyer-Kukan • Tuesday, September 9 AND/OR Wednesday, & October 3 AND/OR Friday, November 7 • 7 to 8:30 p.m.** • Join Rob Meyer-Kukan for this sound bath meditation where he will use singing bowls, gongs, and more to create a gentle soundscape perfect for deep relaxation and peace. September sound bath theme: chakra balancing sound bath; October sound bath theme: cosmic journey of sound; November sound bath theme: gratitude. For more information contact Rob Meyer-Kukan at (248) 962-5475, email contact@7notesnaturalhealth.com, or visit 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

**Daytime Sound Bath with Rob Meyer-Kukan • Wednesday, September 17 AND/OR Thursday, October 16 from 1 to 2:00 p.m. AND/OR Wednesday, November 19 from 10 to 11:00 a.m.** • Join sound therapist, Rob Meyer-Kukan, at 7 Notes Natural Health for this daytime sound bath for busy souls. Relax into a zero-gravity chair and float into this time of deep relaxation. October resonant relaxation theme: a journey out of this world; November resonant relaxation theme: grateful. $40. For more information contact Rob Meyer-Kukan at (248) 962-5475, email contact@7notesnaturalhealth.com, or visit 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

**Candlelit Sound Bath with Rob Meyer-Kukan • Friday, October 19 • 7 to 8:15 p.m.** • Join Rob Meyer-Kukan for this candlelit sound bath meditation at thePARC in downtown Plymouth, Michigan. Rob will play metal and crystal singing bowls, chimes, and more in a sound bath that will wash you with sounds intended to bring calming vibrations to reduce stress and ease tension celebrating our beautiful, creative, and amazing emotions. $40. For more information contact Rob Meyer-Kukan at (248) 962-5475, email contact@7notesnaturalhealth.com, or visit 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

# Dzanc House ~ You're in the Right Place

By Amanda May Moore

Within a beautiful historic house, nestled in the southside historic district of Ypsilanti, you will find a space for creatives where there are regular events, activities, and gallery exhibitions. Upon approaching the house, one will see writing on the window: Dzanc House, you're in the right place. This is not only an indicator of having found the correct house, but also a way of communicating to the community at large that there's a place where they belong. Whether it is for reading, writing, drawing, printmaking, knitting, crocheting, embroidering, performing, or simply absorbing the art—you're in the right place.

**Whether it is for reading, writing, drawing, printmaking, knitting, crocheting, embroidering, performing, or simply absorbing the art—you're in the right place.**

Dzanc House hosts a variety of events ranging from figure drawing to writing workshops, but we are also a space for residencies. Artists, poets, authors, and writers are welcome to apply and stay for a day studio residency or overnight residency. One advantage to staying for a residency is to have training and full access to use the Risograph, which is a special form of eco-friendly printmaking developed in Japan. We offer workshops and lab hours for the community as well, but for anyone really looking to have more hands-on time with the Risograph, an overnight stay is a great opportunity!

As the Creative Director and Residency Coordinator, I curate a new exhibition featuring a local artist or two every month. Our application for 2026 exhibitions will be out this fall for anyone looking to exhibit in our gallery space on the main floor of the house. We will also host calls for art exhibitions for larger participatory shows centered around a theme, such as love in February, the month donned for romance.

We host a quarterly poetry series with incredibly talented national, regional and local poets. So far, we have hosted Jeff Kass who recently published with Dzanc Books a second collection of poetry on comics called, *A True Believer*, and Brittany Rogers, whose collection of poetry, *Good Dress*, is considered by Angel Nafis, author of *BlackGirl Mansion,* "a once-in-a-generation debut."

Dzanc Books is the umbrella non-profit organization of a new community art & culture hub. Dzanc Books was established by Steve Gillis and Dan Wickett in 2006. Since then, it has published diverse voices and continues to promote literary readership, creative writing workshops, and readings across the country. Through the support of grants and generous donations from foundations, corporations, and individuals, this work has been sustained.

**We offer workshops and lab hours for the community as well, but for anyone really looking to have more hands-on time with the Risograph, an overnight stay is a great opportunity!**

The Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation (AAACF) has awarded Dzanc Books grants to host workshops with young writers. Additionally, we have hosted published poet, Marcelo Hernandez Castillo, who taught workshops with young writers at Pioneer High School as well as participated in a podcast with the students. Our published podcasts of poetry can be found on our website wonderfully put together by Paola Ortega, our digital coordinator. Literary Program Director and Grant Writer, Charlene Choi, has developed our free literary and cultural arts programming for our young writers. These programs begin again this coming fall and are free to all. Registration is open on our website and the poetry teachers are eagerly waiting to witness the creative power of writing poetry with young people in our community. They have a unique opportunity to be published as well as hosted on WCBN, a local radio station. Poetry is the focus of our workshops with different themes inspired by rules and rhymes, art, and the work of other great poets we study. This December we will be displaying their art and poetry in the gallery. Be sure to check the show out and join us in celebrating our young writers.

**These programs begin again this coming fall and are free to all. Registration is open on our website and the poetry teachers are eagerly waiting to witness the creative power of writing poetry with young people in our community.**

Dzanc House is more than a house: it is a home for all creatives to feel safe and welcome to be themselves in all forms of expression. Make Dzanc House is your new home for expanding your imagination and artistic practice.

*To learn more about Dzanc House, upcoming opportunities, and calls for artwork, please visit dzanchouse.org and follow our Instagram account @ dzanc_house or Facebook page @Dzanc-House. Dzanc House is located at 402 South Huron Street in Ypsilanti.*

# The Crazy Wisdom Calendar

## Music, Sound, and Voice continued...

**Breathing in My Autumn Body: Qigong, Breathing, Sound, Visual Journaling, and Seasonal Tea with Mary Ledvina & Jennifer Flynn • Saturday, October 25 • 1 to 4:00 p.m.** • Qigong with acupressure and breath will help you move in harmony. The sound bath will focus on your breath. Then you will express your breath on paper with words or lines. Next, do a simple art exercise with the seasonal elements that needs no art experience. End with sharing and a calming tea. $75. For more information contact Mary at (734) 646-9161, email maryledvina@gmail.com, or visit maryledvina.com.

**Kath Weider & Spirit Singing Band • Friday, November 14 • 7 to 9:00 p.m.** • Join lead vocalist, Kath, plus band members, Lori Fithian, Sam Clark, Dan Bilich, and special guests for an evening of songs, song prayers, chants, and improvisational "circle singing," inspired by the work of Bobby McFerrin and his Voicestra. $15 / all donations welcome. For more information visit interfaithspirit.org.

## Naturopathy

**Year-Long Natural Medicine Certification with Mary Light • Begins October 4** • Gain practical and applicable methods of traditional naturopathy to form a foundational background; integrate natural medicine treatments and principles into daily and professional life. In each class, topics and experiences of traditional natural medicine are introduced, demonstrated, and practiced, with immediate benefits. $2,850. For more information visit naturopathicschoolofannarbor.net.

## Peace

**Peace Generator with Craig Harvey • Friday, September 19, October 17, November 21, & December 19 • 7 to 9:00 p.m.** • Join our silent circle, in person and on Zoom, as we meditate on or pray for healing, miracles, and peace within ourselves and across the globe. FREE, donations gratefully received. For more information contact Craig at peacegenerator2001@gmail.com.

## Personal Growth

**Everything's Working Out Perfectly with Karen Greenberg • Sunday, Sept 7, 14, 21, & 28, October 5, 12, 19, & 26, November 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30, December 7, 14, 21, & 28 • Times TBA** • Have you ever felt so overwhelmed with so many things to do that you become very anxious and don't even know where to begin? Then this devolves into you becoming more disorganized, inefficient, and unproductive? Then, Everything's Working Out Perfectly, is perfectly suited for you! Please come and join us! Class format (3+ people) - $100 per person, 3-hour session. For more information contact Karen at (734) 417-9511, emal krngrnbg@gmail.com, or cvisit clair-ascension.com.

**The Circle of Embodied Men with Dan DeSena • Wednesday, September 10, & 24, October 8 & 22, November 5 & 19, December 3 & 17 • 8 to 10:00 p.m.** • Step into a space designed to help you connect with your body, explore healthy masculinity, and build meaningful relationships. This is more than a men's circle—it's a journey of growth and purpose. $30/session. For more information contact Dan at (734) 368-7819 or email desenadan@gmail.com.

**Ann Arbor Nonviolent Communication Immersion Program Autumn 2025 with Lisa Gottlieb • Saturday, September 20, October 18, November 15, & December 13 • 1 to 5:00 p.m.** • Join Lisa Gottlieb MSW, Certified trainer with the Center for Nonviolent Communication for this four-month NVC program. Interactive and experiential, for all levels of NVC proficiency. All dates sliding scale $100-$300. For more information contact Lisa at (734) 417-1144, email nvclisagottlieb@gmail.com, or visit lisagottlieb.com.

**Looking into Loneliness with Bryan Gregory • Saturday, September 27 • 10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.** • This workshop will explore our social context and why loneliness is such a widespread problem, how we can better understand

**Amanda Anastasia** is a ritual artist, apprentice, and messenger of spirits of Nature. Through modes of dancing, singing, playing, performing, and sensing, she utilizes somatic techniques to open and integrate the soul (of herself, others, and the world). She now is gathering others to answer the call of evolution on behalf of radical egalitarianism—a vision for life on Earth in which all of creation is honored, loved, and appreciated as kin. This is the timeless truth of all existence, and there is a way to realize it, here and now.

Raised in Macomb, Anastasia began her undergraduate studies at U-M, and redirected to study transformational mysticism as an initiate of an earth-medicine women's circle. From there, she trained in Ayurveda, Permaculture, and Vedic Studies in Consciousness at Maharishi Institute of Management in Fairfield, IA. After nine months of RYT-200 training, she returned to U-M to complete her self-made BA diving into the topics of shamanism, Ethnobotany, Environmental Psychology, and the relationship between humans and their environment.

Anastasia offers Oracle Card Readings, Soul Integrations, Water Pilgrimages, and corporate, private, and group Elemental Yoga sessions. Contact her through Instagram @joyxpriestess.

ourselves and our relational attachment styles, and some practical ways that we can overcome the problem of loneliness and build stronger relationships and communities. Cost: $35 in person/live streamed. For more information contact the Weber Center at (517)-266-4000 or visit webercenter.org

## Reiki

**Usui System of Reiki Healing, First Degree with Suzy Wienckowski • Saturday, September 27 from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. & Sunday, September 28 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.** • Reiki is a hands-on healing practice that promotes balance of the body/mind/spirit allowing you to feel and function better. Reiki is an invaluable resource for self-care and for bringing healing touch to others. Class includes, Reiki history, spiritual precepts, treatment form for yourself and others, and individual initiations. $200. For more information contact Suzy at (734) 476-7958 or email suzyreiki@aol.com.

**Usui/Holy Fire® Reiki I and II Certification with Andrea Kennedy • Monday, October 6 & Tuesday, October 7 • 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.** • This immersive two-day Reiki I & II class is designed for beginners. Through lecture, discussion, and guided practice, you'll learn Reiki history, hand positions, Japanese techniques, distance healing, and more. Experience four healing meditations, receive Level I and II attunements (placements), and gain the confidence to treat yourself and others. With real-life stories, hands-on practice, and personalized guidance, this in-person class offers a powerful introduction to Reiki. No experience needed. Additional dates taught live online. Located at the Residence Inn by Marriott ,120 West Huron Street, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104. $1,095. For more information email Andrea at contact@mainstreamreiki.com.

**Usui System of Reiki Healing, Second Degree with Suzy Wienckowski • Saturday, October 25 from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. & Sunday, October 26 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.** • Second level of training in the Usui System of Reiki Healing. Students learn and are empowered to use the three sacred Reiki symbols. The symbols focus and intensify the Reiki energy enabling the practitioner to heal on a deeper level and to send Reiki at a distance. (First Degree training is a prerequisite.) $500. For more information contact Suzy at (734) 476-7958 or email suzyreiki@aol.com.

**Restorative Yoga & Reiki-Lithotherapy Workshop with Andrea Astley Dinsdale of Crysterra Wellness • Friday, December 12 • 7 to 8:30 p.m.** • Enjoy this gentle, calming yoga practice paired with the healing benefits of Reiki-Lithotherapy. This deeply nurturing and informative workshop teaches stress/anxiety reduction with appropriate crystals placed on the body as well as a mini-Reiki/Lithotherapy session from the instructor. Suitable for all fitness and experience levels. $30/$35. For more information visit crysterrawellness.com.

## Retreats

**Re-Energize Your Life Retreat with Drs. Will and Wendy Page-Echols • Friday, September 5, through Sunday, September 7** • Respite for those needing a reset or experiencing burnout. Ideal for caregivers, healthcare workers, teachers, or anyone feeling overwhelmed. Enjoy yoga, meditation, and stress-relief workshops. Gain tools for lasting balance and connect with others in a supportive, restorative weekend. Commuter rate: $150. Lodging fees vary by accommodation and include all meals. You'll select and pay for lodging during registration. For more information contact Song of the Morning at (989) 983-4107, email office@songofthemorning.org, or visit songofthemorning.org.

**Finding our Still Center in the Midst of the Storm with Barbara Brodsky, Aaron, & John Orr • Friday, September 12 through Thursday, September 18** • Amid today's chaos, this retreat offers a path to stillness and clarity. Grounded in Noble Silence, Vipassana, Pure Awareness, and loving-kindness practices, it includes meditation, Dharma talks, and group meetings. Join us to cultivate wisdom and compassion—and to meet the world's storms with a steady heart. Lakeside sessions offered, weather permitting. Single occupancy: $1,150; double occupancy: $950. For more information contact the Deep Spring Center at (734) 477-5848, email om@deepspring.org, or visit deepspring.org.

**Daylong Meditation Retreat with Carol Blotter • Saturday, September 13 OR December 6 • 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.** • Meditation practice of sitting and walking plus a short talk. Find peace and calm in the quiet wooded space of the Michigan Friends Center in Chelsea.. Appropriate for all levels of meditators. Suggested Donation $30-$60 or what you can afford. For more information contact the MFC at Manager@mfcenter.org.

**Nature's Portals: Doorways to Inspiration and Well-Being with Bruce & Carol Malnor • Friday, September 26 through Sunday, September 28** • Like autumn leaves, let go and relax into nature's beauty. This fun and restorative weekend blends interactive group activities with quiet reflection, meditative walks, and simple nature-based practices. Reconnect with yourself and the natural world while gaining tools for balance, renewal, and inner peace during this transformative season. Commuter rate: $150, Lodging fees vary by accommodation and include all meals. You'll select and pay for lodging during registration. For more information contact Song of the Morning at (989) 983-4107, email office@songofthemorning.org, or visit songofthemorning.org.

Art by Anthony Powers

**Five-Day Fall Meditation Retreat with Haju Sunim • Wednesday, October 8 through Sunday, October 12** • This retreat is an intensive period of Zen practice geared toward the experienced student. Cost is $60/day, $50/day for members. Partial attendance can be arranged. For more information contact the Zen Buddhist Temple at (734) 761-6520 or email annarborzentemple@gmail.com.

**Inside Tara's Mandala: Invoking Inner Strength through the Practice of Visualization & Protection with Khenpo Tshering Chophel • Friday, October 10 through Sunday, November 2** • Tara is the great protectress who removes obstacles for those who know how to enter her mandala through time-tested Vajrayana Buddhist practices, fulfilling all wishes and bringing us closer to ultimate reality. This retreat is designed for practitioners with some experience of meditation and Buddhism. $225 includes meals; optional overnight accommodations additional. No one turned away for lack of funds. Partial attendance is acceptable; the fee will be reduced accordingly. For more information contact Lama Nancy at (734) 649-2127, email lamanancy@karunabuddhistcenter.org, or visit karunabuddhistcenter.org.

**Fall Yoga & Self-Care Weekend Retreat with Christy DeBurton • Friday, October 17 at 4:00 p.m. through Sunday, October 19 at Noon** • Whether you are a new or experienced yogi, savor a peaceful weekend of self-care: yoga, nature, farm-to-table meals, good company, and time to unplug from the outside world. Pricing varies. See website for details. For more information contact Christy at info@christydeburton.com or visit christydeburton.com.

**Somatic & Parts Work Pathways for Healing Practitioners: Moving Voices with Carrie Hatcher-Kay, Kath Weider, & Stefanie Cohen • Sunday, October 26 • 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.** • This full-day retreat for healing practitioners offers a unique and professional container in which to explore presence/self-essence. Together we will delve into realms where stillness, embodiment, imagination, sound/music, are called in as resources for the therapeutic setting and for one's own life. $175 before October 1st. For more information contact Kath at kathweider@gmail.com.

**Advent Retreat with Carol Ann Gross • Sunday, November 30 through Thursday, December 4** • Listening to the ccripture, reflection on its meaning, meditation, and quiet contemplation of the word will provide the context for a retreat which prepares us all for living fully the liturgical call to recognize and accept this new experience of God which begins with Jesus the Christ. Cost: Commuter: $125; Double: $225; Single: $325. For more information contact the Weber Center at (517)-266-4000 or visit webercenter.org

# The Crazy Wisdom Calendar

## Shamansim

**Journey Circle with Judy Liu Ramsey • Thursday, September 4 & 18, October 2 & 16, November 6 & 20, December 4 & 18 • 7 to 8:30 p.m.** • Twice monthly shamanic journeying for personal inner work on themes designed to help you through transitions and new cycles of your life. Pre-requisite: knowing how to journey. For more information contact Judy at info@JudyRamsey.net or visit JudyRamsey.net.

**Shamanic Extraction with Connie Lee Eiland • Saturday, September 6 from 10:00 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. & Sunday, September 7 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.** • This class teaches ways to perceive and remove misplaced energy (called intrusions) in clients. In addition to multiple "methods" done in pairs, there will be individual journeys and an evening ceremony. A close relationship with helping spirits is required as well as Introduction to Journeying or Way of the Shaman. $275 until August 18, then $325. For more information contact Connie at (248) 809-3230 or email clshebear7@gmail.com.

**Art as Spiritual Practice: The Art of Shamanism with Rocky Shadowbear Rains • Monday, September 20 from 11:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. & Tuesday, September 21 from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.** • In this weekend workshop we will be creating three of the shamans most powerful tools: a staff, ancestor spirit knife, and an ally bundle (spirit bag). Participants will also learn methods of empowering these objects, as well as the basics of shamanic journeying. Saturday evening will also feature a drumming circle and campfire. $195; includes all materials and lunch both days. For more information contact Rocky at (734)799-7502, or email rainsrocky4@gmail.com.

**Basic Journeying: The Art of Shamanism for Practical & Visionary Purposes in Daily Life with Judy Liu Ramsey • Saturday, September 27 & Sunday, September 28 • 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.** • Shamanic journeying is an easy and powerful tool used to access spiritual information. The class introduces you to shamanism and to easy techniques that will help you move safely andintentionally through the world in a balanced way. This class is a prerequisite to more advanced shamanic studies; taught online via Zoom. $160 per person/$80 for repeat students. For more information contact Judy at info@JudyRamsey.net or visit JudyRamsey.net.

**Introduction to Journeying with Connie Lee Eiland • Sunday, September 28 • 10:00 am to 5:00 p.m.** • This six-hour class includes power animal retrieval and journeys to upper, lower, and middle worlds. Journey is with drums and rattles. Class is in person in Southfield. $80 until September 9, then $100. For more information contact Connie at (248) 809-3230 or email clshebear7@gmail.com.

**Shamanism, Death, & Dying with Connie Lee Eiland • Saturday, October 25 & Sunday, October 26 • 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.** • This workshop heightens our spiritual understanding of death and dying and teaches ways to assist others as they approach transition. This class includes individual and group psychopomp, which is helping souls cross over. $200 until October 11; $230 after. For more information contact Connie at (248) 809-3230 or email clshebear7@gmail.com.

**Creating Safety and Sacred Space with Connie Lee Eiland • Thursday, November 9 • 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.** • Creating safety is important not only for all attending, but also to strengthen the work. This class gives you practices, journeys, ways of looking at safety and sacred space that will serve you and your clients. It is experiential. You will clear space before and after and set an altar together becoming aware of the aliveness of all beings. $100 until October 25, then $130. For more information contact Connie at (248) 809-3230 or email clshebear7@gmail.com.

## Spiritual Development

**Sufi Gathering with Imam Kamau Ayubbi • Ongoing Tuesdays • 7 to 8:00 p.m.** • An evening of discussion and Sufi chanting on Zoom. A donation of $5-$10 is suggested. For more information visit interfaithspirit.org.

**The Missing Piece: Connecting With and Cultivating Your Personal Relationship with G-D with Karen Greenberg • Sunday, September 7, 14, 21, & 28, October 5, 12, 19, & 26, November 2, 9, 16 & 23, December 7 & 14 • 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.** • Seven-month course. You will leave with a spiritual practice you design from tools/ways that resonate with you. Find the divinity in yourself and others; connect, trust, surrender, serve; be comforted, healed, protected, guided by G-D for your soul's purpose, dreams, challenges, lessons; possibly find community. Class format (3+ people) - $100 per person, three-hour session. Private with Karen - contact for fee. For more information contact Karen (734) 417-9511, email krngrnbg@gmail.com, or visit clair-ascension.com.

**That Which is Already Awake is the Path: Awakening to the Joy and Unconditional Love Within with Barbara Brodsky, Aaron, & John Orr • Tuesday, September 9 & 23, October 7 & 21, November 4 &18, December 2 & 16 • 6:45 to 9:00 p.m.** • Each class blends meditation instruction with shared exploration. Sessions include a talk from Aaron, time for questions, and related practice. Together, we remember what is already awake within us and the practices that support resting in presence. How do we meet life's challenges with clarity, compassion, and deep, grounded participation in a changing world? For more information contact the Deep Spring Center at (734) 477-5848, email om@deepspring.org, or visit deepspring.org.

**Do Humans Have a Future—and How Do We Get There?" With John Beck & Others • Tuesday, September 9, 16, 23, & 30, Oct 21 & 28, November 4 & 11 • 7:15 to 9:00 p.m.** • Known for deep consciousness research and practical initiatives growing worldwide, Rudolf Steiner is a midwife to an emerging global civilization. In September we'll address what new generations face: AI, climate chaos, persistent brutal warfare, and social-political strife. How can a larger understanding of being human equip us to raise the standards of our own lives and move humanity toward planetary collaboration? Part two in October-November will present in each evening several instances of life-changing, Steiner-inspired initiatives. FREE, donations welcome. Located at the Rudolf Steiner House, 1923 Geddes Ave., Ann Arbor, MI 48104. For more information contact John at (718) 644-7913 or email jhbeck23@gmail.com.

**Words of the Teachers: An Open Mic Tribute to the Masters with Chandra Mitchel • Friday, October 17 • 7 to 8:30 p.m.** • Gather with us in Crazy Wisdom's upstairs Celestial Lounge for candlelit readings of selected writings from revered spiritual teachers such as Rumi, Ram Dass, Hafiz, or Krishnamurti. This open-mic event is designed to foster a sense of community, spiritual reflection, and creative expression in a serene atmosphere. FREE; please consider a suggested donation of $5. Want to join our list of readers for the evening? Email events@crazywisdombookstore.com to sign up! For more information contact Chandra at chandra@crazywisdombookstore.com.

*Let your life lightly dance on the edges of time like dew on the top of a leaf.*
*—Rabindranath Tagore*

**Transforming Consciousness with Diarmuid O'Murchu • Saturday, October 25 • 9 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.** • How the evolutionary consciousness of our time is changing our understanding of religion and leading many people toward a more adult appropriation of faith. This event will be divided into input from our speaker, group discussion, and interaction with Diarmuid. Cost: $55.00 in person/on Zoom. Registration required. For more information contact the Weber Center at (517)-266-4000 or visit webercenter.org

## Stress Management

**Free Focus Café: Embodied Coworking on Zoom with Debra Hopper • Thursdays, September 4, 11, 18, & 25, October 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30, November 6, 13, & 20, December 4, 11, & 18 • 10 to 11:00 a.m.** • Join us for an hour of calm, focused productivity. Begin by naming your intention, settle in with a short embodiment practice, then work quietly in good company. Wrap up with light accountability. Ideal for remote workers, students, creatives, and anyone who benefits from structure, support, and showing up. FREE. For more information contact Debra at (734) 355-6656, email hello@debrahopperonline.com, or visit debrahopperonline.com.

## Sustainable Living Skills

**Natural Building Training Program with Deanne Bednar • Monday, September 1 through Sunday, September 28** • Experience a variety of natural building skills while living and learning on-site at Strawbale Studio. Classes and hands-on experience in foundation, round pole framing, thatched and living roof, strawbale walls, earth plaster, and cob. Enrichment: experience earth oven, foraging, mushroom log fruiting, and more. $1250 / $950 1 month in advance. Includes room and board. Some partial-pay worktrade hours are available. For more information contact Deanne at (248) 496-4088, email ecoartdb@gmail.com, or visit strawbalestudio.org.

**Learning Tour at Strawbale Studio with Deanne Bednar • Sunday, September 14 • 10:00 a.m. to Noon** • Tour the Strawbale Studio and other enchanting natural buildings with thatched and living roofs, strawbale walls, earth plasters, and sculptures! See rocket stoves, earth oven, mushroom garden, and more! Ask lots of questions. Consider registering for the workshop scheduled for that day. $20. For more information contact Deanne at (248) 496-4088, email ecoartdb@gmail.com, or visit strawbalestudio.org.

**Worktrade Program at Strawbale Studio with Deanne Bednar • Tuesday, October 7 through Friday, October 31** • Live on-site at Strawbale Studio and help out 30 hours a week (garden, grounds, maintenance/repairs, office, and natural building-related work) in exchange room, board, and weekly sustainable living skills such as spoon carving, earth sculpting, and more. Nature, purpose, contribution, learning! 30 hours of worktrade/week. For more information contact Deanne at (248) 496-4088, email ecoartdb@gmail.com, or visit strawbalestudio.org.

## Tai Chi, Martial Arts, and Self Defense

**Beginner Tai Chi with Master Wasentha Young • Ongoing Mondays from 10 to 11:15 a.m. AND/OR Thursdays from 6 to 7:15 p.m.** • Tai Chi, often characterized as a moving mindful meditation, is a series of postures linked together in a continuous flow. It integrates the mind and body, promotes relaxation, as well increases balance and concentration. You can attend both sessions at no extra cost! $225; semester begins September 8. For more information contact the Peaceful Dragon School at (734) 741-0695, email info@peacefuldragonschool.com, or visit peacefuldragonschool.com.

**Chen Tai Chi Chuan with Joe Walters • Ongoing Tuesdays AND/OR Thursdays from 5 to 6:00 p.m. AND/OR Saturdays from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.** • Unique movement art emphasizing inner stillness and relaxation developed through disciplined whole-body integration and refined awareness. Instruction in stance training, coiling exercises, and Chen forms. FREE. For more information contact Joe at nnarbortaichi@gmail.com or visit annarbortaichi.com.

**Continuing Tai Chi with Carmo Ribiero • Monday, September 1, 8, 15, 22, & 29, October 6, 13, 20, & 27, November 3, 10, 17, & 25, December 1, 8, 15, 22, & 29 • 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.** • Go beyond the basic principles of Beginners Tai Chi. The movements of Tai Chi are performed in a slow, relaxed fashion and provide numerous mental, physical, and spiritual benefits. Tai Chi has proven to reduce stress, improve balance, focus, memory, and concentration and increase strength, flexibility, and overall well-being. $26 or Class Package available. For more information contact Imagine Fitness and Yoga at (734) 622-8119, email imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com, or visit imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

**Beginner Tai Chi with Carmo Ribiero • Wednesday, September 3, 10, 17, & 24, October 1, 8, 15, 22, & 29, November 5, 12, 19, & 26, December 3, 10, 17, 24, & 31 • 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.** • Whether you are completely new to Tai Chi or need to practice the fundamentals, learn about this "moving meditation" to help activate and stretch your muscles in a slow, gentle manner. No special clothing or equipment are required. Tai Chi helps to improve mental and physical wellness. $26 or Class Package available. For more information contact Imagine Fitness and Yoga at (734) 622-8119, email imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com, or visit imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

**Advanced Tai Chi with Stuart Eddy • Friday, September 5, 12, 19, & 26, October 3, 10, 17, 24, & 31, November 7, 14, 21, & 28, December 5, 12, 19, & 26 • Noon to 1:00 p.m.** • Go beyond the basic principles of Beginners Tai Chi with movements performed in a slow, relaxed fashion and provide numerous mental, physical and spiritual benefits. Tai Chi has proven to reduce stress, improve balance, flexibility, focus, memory and concentration and increase strength, flexibility and overall well-being. $26 or Class Package available. For more information contact Imagine Fitness and Yoga at (734) 622-8119, email imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com, or visit imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

**Wu Style Tai Chi Chaun with Marilyn Feingold • Sunday, Sept 7, 14, 21, & 28, October 5, 12, 19, & 26, November 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30, December 7, 14, 21, & 28 • 4 to 5:00 p.m.** • Learn the ancient art of meditation in motion with this "soft style" martial art emphasizing relaxation and balance. Drop-in - $5 per session collected at the door. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

**Free Try-It Adult Tang Soo Do (Korean Martial Art) • Wednesday, September 10 • 7:45 to 8:30 p.m.** • Free Try-It class for ages 18+ to try Tang Soo Do, a Korean martial art. Learn basic blocks, strikes and kicks. If you enjoy the class, sign up for an eight-week session following and earn your yellow belt. No experience needed, all fitness levels welcome. FREE. For more information contact Lynda at (248) 739-0841, email balancepoint.fitness@gmail.com, or visit balancepointfitnessa2.com.

**Free Try-It Self-Defense Class with Lynda Gronlund • Sunday, September 14 • 1 to 2:00 p.m.** • Try a free self-defense class for ages 16+. Like it? Sign up for the six-week session following if desired. Learn prevention, situational awareness, and quick releases from common grabs. FREE. For more information contact Lynda at (248) 739-0841, email balancepoint.fitness@gmail.com, or visit balancepointfitnessa2.com.

## Tarot and Divination

**Highest Guide Tarot & Channeling with Mari Ziolkowski • Ongoing Thursdays • 2 to 7:00 p.m.** • Highest guide meditative tarot, light language channeling, herbal healing divination, Andean Mesa clearing and healing. Offered by appointment. $2 dollars a minute. For more information contact Mari at (505) 484-9134, email mari.p.ziolkowski@gmail.com, or visit sparklegoddessspiritualservices.com.

**Tarot & Oracle Readings at Crazy Wisdom with Nina McDermott • Ongoing Fridays from 2 to 7:00 p.m. AND/OR Ongoing Saturdays from 3 to 7:00 p.m.** • Intuitive Tarot & Oracle Readings with Nina provide clarity, guidance, and deep understanding. Ask a question or see what the cards have to tell you about what's going on in relationships, your spiritual path, or life challenges. Three card—$20, five card—$45, nine card— $65. For more information contact Nina McDermott (323) 363-4807, email nina@seeseehealing.com, or visit seeseehealing.com.

**Intuitive Guide & Oracle Card Reader with Deborah Cherrin • Ongoing Saturdays from Noon to 5:00 p.m. & Sundays from Noon to 3:00 p.m.** • Through her heartfelt approach and psychic awareness, Deborah uses tarot and oracle cards to help clients find comfort, clarity, and healing in all aspects of their lives. Deborah empowers others to trust their intuition and tap into their inner strength, fostering personal growth and transformation. $2 per minute. No services offered the final weekends of each month. For more information contact Deborah at debcherrin@gmail.com or visit wiseowlartandspirit.com.

**Dance & Divination with Mylita Benjamin • Friday, September 19, October 17, November 21, & December 19 • 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.** • Using guided movement meditation, journaling, and ritual to explore the art of divination. there will be time for sharing in community, as well as additional support from our guide, Mylita. This is an LGBTQ+ and BIPOC safe space! Bring a Yoga mat, eye cover, journal, and water bottle. No dance or divination experience necessary, all levels welcome! $140. For more information contact Mylita at mylitabenjamin@gmail.com.

If you are interested in obtaining some biographical information about the teachers, lecturers, and workshop leaders whose classes, talks, and events are listed in this Calendar, please look in the section that follows the Calendar, which is called "Teachers, Lecturers, Workshop Leaders, and The Centers" and which starts on page 99.

# The Crazy Wisdom Calendar

## Theater

**Dry Summer by Robert Axelrod with Theater NOVA • Friday, October 10 through Sunday, November 2 • Fridays at 8:00 p.m., Saturdays at 3:00 p.m. & 8:00 p.m., Sundays at 2:00 p.m.** • Depressed and longing to get his life back on track, gay, Jewish, twenty-something Ethan returns to his Ann Arbor family home. When he takes a job as a "sober companion" to his recovering alcoholic neighbor, an unconventional friendship ensues. Full of Ann Arbor references, this charming and nostalgic play takes us all home. Tickets: General $30 / 65 & over $25 / Students $15. For more information contact Theater NOVA at (734) 635-8450, email a2theatrenova@gmail.com, or visit theatrenova.org.

**DJ Whittington's Kool Kat: A Hip-Hop Panto by Carla Milarch & R. MacKenzie Lewis • Friday, December 5 through Sunday, January 4 • Fridays at 7:30 p.m., Saturdays at 3:00 p.m. AND 7:30 p.m., Sundays at 2:00 p.m.** • The holiday hilarity of our annual Panto returns. Bring the whole family to this rollicking all-ages entertainment with a hip-hop twist. Cheer the hero, boo the villain, and enjoy original tunes and kid-friendly parodies of popular hip-hop song—set to The Kool Kat's sick beats. Directed by Mike Sandusky. Single tickets: $32 for adults, $12 for kids 16 years and under. For more information contact Theater NOVA at (734) 635-8450, email a2theatrenova@gmail.com, or visit theatrenova.org.

## Writing and Poetry

**Plein Air Poetry: Inspiration & Observation with Mary Ledvina • Wednesday, September 10 • 6 to 8:00 p.m.** • Go out with me into the wild world to give some wildness to your writing. We will find a spot or spots to be in nature and use prompts for poem writing as well as hear some examples and some of the processes of nature poets. You can live an hour as a nature poet and have epiphanies and deep thoughts under the trees. $45-$60. For more information contact Mary at (734) 646-9161, email maryledvina@gmail.com, or visit maryledvina.com.

**Crazy Wisdom Poetry Workshop with Edward Moring, David Jibson, & Lisa Perrin • Wednesday, September 10, October 8, November 12, & December 10** • Informal writers' workshop. All welcome. Participants read the draft of a poem or short fiction for positive, constructive comments by peers. Workshops are held online via Zoom. For more information contact cwpoetrycircle@gmail.com or visit cwcircle.poetry.blog.

**Writing about Garden & Place with Peggy A. Alaniz • Thursday, September 11 • 6 to 8:00 p.m.** • This workshop will concentrate on capturing a natural setting such as your garden, outdoor space, plants or any natural scenery. Techniques will include sketching, meditating and listening to what the place is trying to tell you to write as an artist. All proceeds will be donated to Ann Arbor Farm and Garden including any book sales. $15. For more information contact Peggy at paalaniz.email.me@gmail.com.

**Writing Workshop: Reckoning with Tarriane DeYonker • Saturday, September 20 • 1 to 4:00 p.m.** • Join us to explore differences through creative writing, reading our work, and receiving feedback on our fresh work. Beginning and experienced writers are welcome. Cost: $35.00 In person/Zoom. For more information contact the Weber Center at (517)266-4000 or visit webercenter.org.

**Plein Air Poetry: Short Forms with Mary Ledvina • Wednesday, October 1 • 6 to 8:00 p.m.** • Go out with me into the wild world to give some wildness to your writing. We will go to aspot either in nature or in the conservatory and we will write short form poems from prompts after reading some examples of Haiku and Limerick. You can live an hour as a nature poet and have epiphanies and deep thoughts under the trees. $45-$60. For more information contact Mary at (734) 646-9161, email maryledvina@gmail.com, or visit maryledvina.com.

**Writing Workshop: Nature's Teaching on Letting Go with Tarriane DeYonker • Saturday, October 18 • 1 to 4:00 p.m.** • In this workshop we will have opportunities to look at our own—and others'—process of letting go. This is a hybrid workshop. Cost: $35.00 In person/Zoom. For more information contact the Weber Center at (517)266-4000 or visit webercenter.org.

**Plein Air Poetry: Craft with Mary Ledvina • Wednesday, October 22• 6 to 8:00 p.m.** • Go out with me into the wild world to give some wildness to your writing. We will discuss how to make your notes about nature into poems; then you will go to a sit spot and try out your own poem making. You can live an hour as a nature poet and have epiphanies and deep thoughts under the trees. $45-$60. For more information contact Mary at (734) 646-9161, email maryledvina@gmail.com, or visit maryledvina.com.

**Plein Air Poetry: Revision with Mary Ledvina • Wednesday, November 12 • 6 to 8:00 p.m.** • Go out with me into the wild world to give some wildness to your writing. Bring your poem drafts and will discuss and give you space to revise your work. $45-$60. For more information contact Mary at (734) 646-9161, email maryledvina@gmail.com, or visit maryledvina.com.

**Writing Workshop: Anticipating Holidays with Tarriane DeYonker • Saturday, November 29 • 1 to 4:00 p.m.** • This workshop will explore both our anticipation of them and our memories of holidays past, noting how each affects the other. Come join us in writing, reading our work, and giving feedback on each other's writing. Beginning and experienced writers will find this opportunity helpful. This is an in-person workshop. Cost: $35.00 In person/Zoom. For more information contact the Weber Center at (517)266-4000 or visit webercenter.org.

## Yoga

**Iyengar Yoga with David Rosenberg • Mondays from 6 to 7:30 p.m. AND/OR Thursdays from 7 to 8:30 p.m. AND/OR Saturdays & Sundays from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.** • Semester begins September 15th. Experience invigorating yoga postures using Iyengar methods to provide strength, flexibility, and balance. Create a feeling of well-being, reduce stress, and release tension. The instructor emphasizes the use of props and individualized instruction so students of varying experience, age, flexibility, and strength can participate together. $125 for the 10-class session. For more information contact David (734) 646-4195, email massage4@aol.com, or visit aarecedonline.com.

**Wild Goose Qigong with Master Wasentha Young • Ongoing Tuesdays from 6 to 7:00 p.m. AND/OR Thursdays 10 to 11:00 a.m.** • The Wild Goose Qigong Form—continuous movement using imagery, yogic like stretching, touching acu-points, and engaging with universe, nature, and earth energies. Come Tuesdays (hybrid) and/or Thursdays (in-person) same price. Not wheelchair accessible. $225 for semester; begins September 9. For more information contact the Peaceful Dragon School at (734) 741-0695, email info@peacefuldragonschool.com, or visit peacefuldragonschool.com.

**Yoga with David Black • Ongoing Tuesdays • 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.** • Beginning and experienced students in the classes learn traditional yoga postures (hatha yoga) with an emphasis on relaxation, concentration, and working with the breath. Classes fill up quickly, so early registration is necessary; semester begins September 9. $12 per session. For more information contact the Zen Buddhist Temple at (734) 761-6520 or email annarborzentemple@gmail.com.

**Yoga for Athletes & More with Yoga House Ann Arbor • Ongoing Wednesdays • 6 to 7:30 p.m.** • Anyone looking for a strong practice will enjoy increasing core strength, enhancing flexibility, agility, balance, and mental focus with this fun and energetic practice. For more information visit yogahouseannarbor.com.

**Hatha Yoga with Sam Lieberman • Ongoing Thursdays • 9:15 to 10:15 a.m.** • Grounded, breath-led movement that builds strength, balance, and calm from the inside out. Drop-in $18 per session. 10% senior discount. Packages for yoga programs are available. Cash or Venmo at the door. Bring your own mats. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

**Yoga Stretch with Samantha Lieberman • Ongoing Thursdays • 10:20 to 11:20 a.m.** • A full-body reset with intentional stretching to release tension and move with more freedom. Drop-in $18 per session. 10% senior discount. Packages for yoga programs are available. Cash or Venmo at the door. Bring your own mats. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

**Golden Lotus Hatha Yoga Classes with Song of the Morning Yoga & Meditation Retreat • Ongoing Saturdays • 2 to 3:30 p.m.** • Taught in the Golden Lotus Yoga style developed in the 1950s by Yogacharya J. Oliver Black, a direct disciple of Yogananda, these classes are slow-paced, meditative, and designed for all levels of experience. Each class includes short meditations and is infused with spiritual inspiration to attune you with the sacred being that you are. FREE, donations accepted to support free class offerings. For more information contact Song of the Morning at (989) 983-4107, email office@songofthemorning.org, or visit songofthemorning.org.

**Gentle Flow Yoga with Caitie Shaughnessy • Monday, September 1, 8, 15, 22, & 29, October 6, 13, 20, & 27, November 3, 10, 17, & 24, December 1, 8, 15, 22, & 29 • 11 a.m. to Noon** • Gentle Flow Yoga is the perfect experience for anyone who enjoys yoga and would like a gentle to moderate level of challenge. The class incorporates breath work, standing flow sequences, prone and supine work, and different anatomical areas of focused support as well. $26 per class or class package available. For more information contact Imagine Fitness and Yoga at (734) 622-8119 or email imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

**Ashtanga with Sandra Allen • Tuesday, September 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30, October 7, 14, 21, & 28, November 4, 11, 18, & 25, December 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30 • 9 to 10:00 a.m.** • Ashtanga yoga is a regimented series of asanas "postures" that are connected to the breath. The focus in this class is the first half of the primary series. Students may advance or modify as guided by the instructor. Ashtanga is foundational for any yoga class for proper alignment and strengthening. Set an intention to challenge yourself. $26 per class or class package available. For more information contact Imagine Fitness and Yoga at (734) 622-8119 or email imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

**Yoga Essentials with Laurie Dean • Tuesday, September 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30, October 7, 14, 21, & 28, November 4, 11, 18, & 25, December 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30 • 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.** • Participants will learn the building blocks of yoga practice. These classes are great for beginning and intermediate level practitioners looking to establish good form, balance, and flow in their practice. Your instructor will lead you through basic and gentle standing and seated poses and you will learn about the healing benefits of Yoga. $26 per class or class package available. For more information contact Imagine Fitness and Yoga at (734) 622-8119 or email imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

**Hatha Yoga with Wendy Dolen • Tuesday, September 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30, October 7, 14, 21, & 28, November 4, 11, 18, & 25, December 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30** • 5 to 6:00 p.m. • Hatha yoga is a branch of yoga primarily concerned with mastery of the body. The term is derived from the Sanskrit '*ha'*, meaning sun, and '*tha'*, meaning moon, leading to the common interpretation that Hatha practices are designed to unite and balance these two energies. $26 per class or class package available. For more information contact Imagine Fitness and Yoga at (734) 622-8119 or email imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

**Hatha-Flow Yoga for Wellness (Beginner/Level 1— Intermediate/Level 2) with Andrea Astley Dinsdale of Crysterra Wellness • Tuesday, September 2, 9,16, 23, & 30, October 7 AND/OR Tuesday, October 28, November 4, 11, 18, & 25, December 2, 9, & 16 • 7:30 to 8:30 p.m.** • Improve physical and mental balance, flexibility, strength, and stamina with this moderately challenging yoga practice. Vinyasa: "flow" through connection of breath and movement and Hatha: "sun and moon" balance and unification in Sanskrit. Suitable for those with a moderate fitness level, some experience with yoga is helpful although not necessary. $98/$108. For more information visit crysterrawellness.com.

**Morning Flow Vinyasa Yoga (Beginner/Level 1—Intermediate/Level 2) with Andrea Astley Dinsdale of Crysterra Wellness • Wednesday, September 3, 10, 17, & 24, October 1, 8, 15, 22, & 29 AND/OR Wednesday, October 29, November, 5, 12, 19, & 26, December 3 &10 • 7:30 to 8:15 a.m.** • Get up and get moving through a series of fluid postures flowing through sequences of sun salutations, standing and seated postures in this energizing early morning class. Emphasis is placed on linking breath with movement, increasing strength, flexibility, and stamina. This class is suitable for most fitness and experience levels. Virtual only. $98/$108. For more information visit crysterrawellness.com.

**Healthy Aging: Yoga Sculpt with Laurie Dean • Wednesday, September 3, 10, 17, & 24, October 1, 8, 15, 22, & 29, November 5, 12, 19, & 26, December 3, 10, 17, 24, & 31 • 10 to 11:00 a.m.** • Yoga Sculpt is designed to build bone strength through dynamic movement while using light weight. Participants can expect each class to consist of a light cardio warm up, movement and strengthening via weights, balance, posture/breath work, and a cool down stretch/mobility routine. $26 per class or class package available. For more information contact Imagine Fitness and Yoga at (734) 622-8119 or email imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

**Yin Restorative Yoga with JT Quon • Thursday, September 4, 11, 18, & 25, October 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30, November 6, 13, 20, & 27, December 4, 11, & 18• 9 to 10:00 a.m.** • Give yourself the downtime needed to quiet the mind, find a sense of peace, and stretch your body. Yin Restorative yoga is practiced at a slow pace, focusing on long holds, stillness, and deep breathing. Class is a mix of restorative yoga combined with yin yoga which will allow you to experience a rejuvenating and restful practice. $26 per class or class package available. For more information contact Imagine Fitness and Yoga at (734) 622-8119 or email imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

**Hatha Yoga with JT Quon • Thursday, September 4, 11, 18, & 25, October 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30, November 6, 13, 20, & 27, December 4, 11, & 18 • 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.** • Hatha yoga is a branch of yoga primarily concerned with mastery of the body. The term is derived from the Sanskrit '*ha'*, meaning sun, and '*tha'*, meaning moon, leading to the common interpretation that Hatha practices are designed to unite and balance these two energies. $26 per class or class package available. For more information contact Imagine Fitness and Yoga at (734) 622-8119 or email imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

**Gentle Restorative Yoga for Stress & Anxiety Relief (Beginner/Level 1) with Andrea Astley Dinsdale of Crysterra Wellness • Thursday, September 4, 11, 18, 25, October 2, 9,16, & 23 • 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. AND/OR Thursday, October 30, November 6, 13, 20, & 27, December 4, 11& 18** • Relax and Restore with this gentle stress and anxiety relieving yoga practice. Create harmony and balance of body and mind through physical postures, breathing techniques, and an extended guided relaxation at the end of class. Suitable for most fitness and experience levels. $98/$108. For more information visit crysterrawellness.com.

**Yoga Movement and Flow with Wendy Dolen • Friday, September 5, 12, 19, & 26, October 3, 10, 17, 24, & 31, November 7, 14, 21, & 28, December 5, 12, 19, & 26 • 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.** • Learn the building blocks of a yoga practice and variations for postures and movement that work best for you. These classes are great for beginning and intermediate level practitioners looking to establish good form, balance, and flow in their practice. With guided instruction explore what works best for you. No prior yoga experience necessary. $26 per class or class package available. For more information contact Imagine Fitness and Yoga at (734) 622-8119 or email imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

**First Friday Micro-Retreat with Leslie Pertz • Friday September 5; October 3; November 7; December 5 • 5:15 to 8:30 p.m.** • A collaboration with 7 Notes Natural Health, LLC and Peachtree Yoga, LLC. A series of three events held at one location, 60-minute yoga class, 20 minute guided/reiki meditation, and 90-minute sound bath. Come for one event, two events, or stay for all three for an evening of self-care to reset and refresh. You must register separately for each event. Sound bath $40; yoga and meditation are pay-what-you-can. For more information contact Leslie at info@peachtreewellnessmi.com or visit lesliepertz.com.

**Slow Flow Vinyasa II/III with JT Quon • Saturday, September 6, 13, 20, & 27, October 4, 11, 18, & 25, November 1, 8, 15, 22, & 29, December 6, 13, 20, & 27 • 8:30 to 9:30 a.m.** • Participants will learn the building blocks of yoga practice in a variety of introductory classes. These classes are great for beginning and intermediate level practitioners looking to establish good form, balance, and flow in their practice. Many classes are the perfect refresher of the fundamentals important to Yoga practice. $26 per class or class package available. For more information contact Imagine Fitness and Yoga at (734) 622-8119 or email imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

For almost 28 years, **PHOENIX DUFFY** has partnered with clients to help them achieve success. As a spiritual development lifecoach, an intuitive energy healer/teacher, Akashic soul record transformer, breathwork facilitator, hypnotherapist, and Reiki practitioner, she has supported and mentored thousands of clients in releasing stuck stories, outdated contracts and has witnessed many of their transformations and timeline shifts which has lead to real tangible results in their daily lives.

Lately for the summer, Phoenix has been enjoying time in the sun and swimming in Lake Michigan and is excited to announce she is seeing clients out of a new space in Saline at Thrive! Wellness Center.

Contact Duffy through her website at threebutterflies.org, by phone at (734) 765-5830 or by email at Pheonix@threebutterflies.org.

# The Crazy Wisdom Calendar

## Yoga continued...

**Vinyasa: Level I/II with JT Quon • Sunday, Sept 7, 14, 21, & 28, October 5, 12, 19, & 26, November 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30, December 7, 14, 21, & 28 • 8:30 to 9:30 a.m.** • An energizing practice that links breath to movement through a series of poses to form a continuous flow that helps improve strength, flexibility, and balance. This class is appropriate for those who are new to Vinyasa and provides challenge to those with experience seeking a stimulating practice. $26 per class or class package available. For more information contact Imagine Fitness and Yoga at (734) 622-8119 or email imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

**Moving Through Grief with Zion Well Yoga • Wednesday, September 17 • 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.** • Moving Through Grief is a gentle, grounding workshop designed to support you through the tender experience of loss. We'll begin with restorative yoga—a deeply nourishing practice where the body is supported in stillness, allowing the nervous system to regulate and the subtleties of emotion to move through. This intentional space creates room for clarity, connection, and healing. We'll close with a short, supportive conversation on grief in community. No experience needed—just bring yourself. 18+. For more information visit zionwell.com.

**Humans: Divine Co-creators in the Cosmos with Barbara Brodsky, Aaron, Colette Simone, & Yeshua • Saturday, October 4, November 1, & December 6 • 11 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.** • These workshops introduced the vast, multidimensional cosmos we inhabit and how humans contribute to the inter-cosmos collective. Guided by Aaron, Yeshua, and Spirit Friends, we explored honoring all beings, cultivating love-based discernment, and saying no to distortion. Now we deepen this work, exploring co-creation and humanity's role in expanding positive polarity in the multiverse. For more information contact the Deep Spring Center at (734) 477-5848, email om@deepspring.org, or visit deepspring.org.

**Peaceful Dragon Rising Stretches with Master Wasentha Young • Thursday, October 23 & 30, November 6 & 13 • 8 to 8:40 a.m.** • During these sessions you will learn 15 Qigong (energy work) stretches. This easy to learn routine offers a great way to start your day. The range of stretches, head to toes, are done from a standing or seated position and help to loosen up and relaxing muscles. Participants must be able to navigate one flight of stairs. $50. For more information contact the Peaceful Dragon School at (734) 741-0695, email info@peacefuldragonschool.com, or visit peacefuldragonschool.com.

**Yoga Nidra Workshop with Andrea Astley Dinsdale of Crysterra Wellness • Friday, November 7 • 7 to 8:30 p.m.** • Yoga Nidra promotes the production of low beta, increases and balances alpha and theta, and produces delta brainwaves. One hour of Yoga Nidra is said to be equivalent to four hours of restorative sleep! This gentle workshop pairs a calming yoga practice with guided Yoga Nidra Meditation. Suitable for all fitness and experience levels. $30/$35. For more information visit crysterrawellness.com.

**Valarie Thomas** applied her Chemical engineering knowledge (S.B. MIT, PhD U of MI) for over two decades at notable workplaces (NASA, the U of MI, and SISU) to engineer novel performing chemical systems, but is currently a budding entrepreneur of diverse educational efforts. She is missionistic minded with helping the public understand and foster love for chemistry in all its diverse manifestations, obvious and obscure. She has finally gotten boldly committed to growing her Nutrition Evangelism, LLC (est. 2009) by delivering topical Nutritionars(™) which aim to inform the public about inner workings of bodily chemistry and how nutritional intakes influence those processes, especially for potentially enhancing wellness.

Thomas works as a part-time educator with the miRcore non-profit supporting its mission to educate the public about genes and their role in human health and disease. An avid multi-media crafter, with a mini-Michaels store in her residence, readily crafts resources to creatively facilitate learning.

For more information on available Nutritionars(™) or to request a custom one or a lesson on a chemistry related topic send an email to ChE4theEarth@gmail.com briefly describing what knowledge you seek and the words Nutritionar(™)/chemistry in the subject line.

See Thomas's Nutritionars(™) listing under the calendar heading Food and Nutrition.

# TEACHERS, LECTURERS, WORKSHOP LEADERS & THE CENTERS

**Aaron** is a non-embodied spiritual teacher, guiding through wisdom gained across lifetimes.

**Active Against ALS** is a grassroots non-profit organization which raises funds for ALS research.

**Peggy A. Alaniz** has an MFA in Writing and Poetics from Naropa University's Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics. She writes *Crazy Wisdom Community Journal's* Tea Column.

**Sandra Allen** began practicing Ashtanga yoga daily in 2013. Allen met Angela Jamison in 2010 and became a dedicated practitioner through her guidance.

**Ann Arbor Farm and Garden's** mission is to promote and support local gardens, and farms.

**Andrea Astley Dinsdale,** RYT-500, E-RYT-200, and meditation coach, has been practicing for over 25 years. She is certified in Clinical and Thai Reflexology, a Reiki Master, and Certified Lithotherapist.

**Sara Atwell,** RN, BSN, brings her knowledge of physical and nutritional health to the mat. RYT 200 and 300; Pilates Mat I certified.

**BalancePoint Fitness** is a small personal training studio in north Ann Arbor inside PKSA Karate A2.

**Deanne Bednar**, Instructor at Strawbale Studio since 2003, Illustrated *The Hand-Sculpted House* and loves to forage!

**David Bell** is Senior Minister Emeritus at the Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth

**Mylita Benjamin** has been facilitating embodiment, ritual, and sacred spaces for 25+ years. She is an Ordained Priestess and a lifetime mover.

**David Black** was trained by the Sivananda Yoga Organization, and he combines that experience with meditation training.

**Carol Blotter** has been teaching meditation for almost 25 years. Her practice and study have led to a blending of Buddhism and Non-Duality teachings.

**Rachel Briggs** is an end-of-life doula, trained by The Dying Year. She has been facilitating the virtual Death Cafe for over five years.

**Barbara Brodsky,** founder of Deep Spring Center, is an ordained Interfaith Minister who has practiced meditation since 1960. She teaches Vipassana and non-dual awareness.

**Michelle Camillieri** has been in the healing arts for over twenty years. She has her own private practice as a reflexologist, craniosacral therapy/somato emotional release, and sound.

**Khenpo Tshering Chophel** is an experienced Buddhist teacher based in Ann Arbor. He earned a Ph.D in Buddhist Studies following traditional monk's training in India.

**Dr. Kapila Castoldi** has studied meditation under the guidance of spiritual teacher Sri Chinmoy for 40 years. Her interest in Ayurveda spans two decades.

**Deborah Charrin** has always been attuned to her intuitive and empathic abilities. Her readings offer insights and clarity, guiding clients on their journeys with wisdom and compassion.

**Venerable Thubten Chodron** is an author, teacher, and the founder and abbess of Sravasti Abbey, the only Tibetan Buddhist training monastery for nuns and monks in the US.

**Rowena Conahan** co-founded and directed a nature connection program. She's the author of *Fuzzy Caterpillar: Stories and Activities for Forest Kindergartens and Families*.

**Maum Gloria Cox** is an ordained Buddhist Priest with 20 years of experience.

**Dori Curtis**, Retreat leader since 2006. Creates safe, transformative spaces for breathwork, embodiment, and soul-aligned manifestation.

**Jagwa Kelli Davenport** is an ordained dharma teacher with five years of experience.

**Christy DeBurton** is a Registered Yoga Teacher who has been offering yoga and healthy lifestyle guidance for the past 27 years to help people manage stress and optimize well-being.

**The Deep Spring Center** offers programs from diverse traditions, supporting a compassionate community committed to spiritual practice, wisdom, and living with an open heart.

**Dan DeSena** is a psychotherapist and coach with over 17 years of experience. His passion is helping men heal, connect, and reach their potential through sacred spaces.

**Tarianne DeYonker**, OP, MSW, is an Amherst Writers and Artists Affiliate.

**Laurie Dean** has been teaching for almost 20 years and continues to study Parayoga, emphasizing alignment along with meditation to help quiet the mind.

**Wendy Dolen** is an experienced yoga instructor who has been sharing her passion for yoga since 2001.

*Listen! The wind is rising, and the air is wild with leaves, we have had our summer evenings, now for October eves!*

*—Humbert Wolfe*

**The Dying Year** provides comprehensive natural death care education, consultations, and referrals.

**Stuart Eddy** teaches because he enjoys helping others discover and explore the form.

**Connie Eiland** has been a Shamanic Practitioner and Teacher for 20 years. She has studied with Sandra Ingerman, Betsy Bergstrom, Herb Stevenson, and Ana Larramendi.

**The Enlightened Soul Center** has a metaphysical store offering a large selection of tarot cards, crystals, stones, jewelry, gifts, spiritual items, sage and other tools for energy grounding and protection.

**Jackie Farah** feels that by helping people learn more about what's best for their body through an active lifestyle and balanced diet, one will continually enrich their lives.

**John Farah**, a runner for many years, knows the importance of having good balance, strength, and flexibility as one ages.

**Marylin Feingold** began training in Tai Chi Chuan at Botsford Hospital Rehabilitation Center to help control pain and maintain good joint and muscle mobility.

**Jennifer Flynn**, L.Ac., is the founder of Roots of Wisdom Acupuncture, in which she includes qigong, self-acupressure, meditation, and sound healing.

OCTOBER IS THE FALLEN LEAF, BUT IT IS ALSO A WIDER HORIZON MORE CLEARLY SEEN. IT IS THE DISTANT HILLS ONCE MORE IN SIGHT, AND THE ENDURING CONSTELLATIONS ABOVE THEM ONCE AGAIN.

—HAL BORLAND

**Lori Fithian** has been leading drum circles and workshops since 1998 and loves to help folks of all ages get into a community groove!

**John Friedlander** is an internationally acclaimed psychic, author, and teacher with degree from Duke University and Harvard Law.

**Mara Gibson** is an experienced faster working with Steiner Health.

**Robin Lily Goldberg**, (MFA, RYT), is an Ecological Artist, Organic Intelligence® Coach, and Healing-Centered Educator. She offers co-learning opportunities to support transformation and environmental revitalization.

**Jill Goldstein** is a licensed group fitness instructor dedicated to helping people stay healthy and active; creating energizing workouts that inspire others to move and groove.

**Lisa Gottlieb** MSW is a certified trainer with the Center for Nonviolent Communication and has been leading trainings and workshops for a dozen years.

**Karen Greenberg** is a Success-Tracking Train-the-Trainer, Essence Repatterning and D.O.V.E. Practitioner, dance instructor, physical therapist, and teacher/author for metaphysical spiritual seekers worldwide.

**Bryan Gregory** is currently a chaplain at Adrian Dominican Sisters. Bryan earned his Doctor of Ministry degree from Fuller Theological Seminary.

**Lynda Gronlund** is a certified personal trainer and nutrition coach; 5th degree black belt Master Instructor in Tang Soo Do and has been teaching Cardio Kickboxing since 2010.

**Sister Carol Ann Gross**, OP is an Adrian Dominican Sister who has been a director and teacher of Spiritual Direction, a pastoral minister, and a retreat director.

**Gloria Hemsher** is a gifted psychic, teacher, and co-author of *Psychic Psychology*, 2011.

**Debra Hopper** is a Certified Embodiment Coach offering body-first practices that ease stress and improve focus.

**Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth** is a vibrant and diverse spiritual community welcoming and exploring all spiritual paths.

**Roger Jackson** is professor emeritus of Asian studies and religion at Carleton College and visiting professor of Buddhism at Maitripa College.

**Jewel Heart** is dedicated to bringing the practice of Tibetan Buddhism to everyone.

**Jewel Heart Instructors** lead participants in meditation among other spiritual and recreational activities.

**The Karuna Buddhist Center** is an independent nonprofit with its roots in Tibetan Buddhism and a nonsectarian emphasis.

**Esther Kennedy**, OP Dominican Sister of Adrian, Michigan, is a retreat leader and spiritual director. She conducts a monthly Day of Mindfulness at Weber Center.

**Mary Ledvina**, MOT, is a writer, artist, healer, teacher, coach and cacaoista.

**Sam Lieberman** received teacher training in Yoga Fit and Yoga Medics and has been practicing yoga since 1988.

**Mary Light** owned and directed the Ann Arbor School of Massage, Herbal, and Natural Medicine for 16 years, now in private practice consulting and teaching certification programs.

**Bruce and Carol Malnor** are longtime educators and retreat leaders with 40+ years of experience.

**Michael Marie** of Hickory Nut Farmstead has decades of experience teaching and weaving baskets, practical crafts, and even burial caskets.

**Gabi May** is a current PHD student studying natural product drug discovery.

**Nina McDermott** is an intuitive tarot and oracle reader at Crazy Wisdom and a Reiki Master and sound healer at Asian Healing Traditions.

**Dr. Molly McMullen-Laird and Dr. Quentin McMullen** are board certified MDs who specialize in anthroposophical medicine. They have practiced in Ann Arbor for over 27 years.

**Lindsay Merbaum** is an author of strange tales, the founder of Pick Your Potions, and the high priestess of the Study Coven.

**Debra Metler** is a retired Clinical Social Worker and Certified Health Coach. She is passionate about helping adults express their inner playfulness for better health.

**Rob Meyer-Kukan** is a licensed massage therapist, and sound healer, and owner of 7 Notes Natural Health.

**The Michigan Friends Center** is a non-profit Quaker based rental space promoting justice, environmentalism, and contemplation.

**Jackie Miller** is a Certified Professional Breathwork Practitioner; trained with Transformative Education International in Sydney, Australia, in 2009; certified by the Global Professional Breathwork Alliance.

**Mother Bear Sanctuary** rescues animals that then rescue people.

**Irene's Myomassology Institute** is the oldest and largest massage school in the Midwest. Founded by Irene Gauthier in 1987, it continues to set high standards for massage education.

**NatureSpeak** offers nature-connected spiritual healing for people and places.

**Paula Neys**, OT, CLT, has close to 50 years' experience as an occupational therapist and energy medicine practitioner.

**Chris Nordin** is master glassblower, with 30 + years of experience as an artist and entrepreneur. He founded the Glass Academy in Dearborn with his wife, Michelle Plucinsky.

**Eric and Israel Nordin** are the founders of Detroit Design Center with 25 years of experience designing and creating fine art.

**Ann O'Hilton** is an Ann Arbor based artist, who paints primarily in oil and watercolor on a variety of surfaces with a diverse subject matter.

**Courtney Fitzpatrick** is the owner and caretaker of Verapose Yoga and Meditation House. She co-founded Verapose Yoga with Katie Hoener, LMSW in 2015, and together they've co-created two Yoga Alliance certified Yoga Teacher Trainings. (RYT-200 & RYT-300). Fitzpatrick has her Master's Degree in Arts Administration,RYT-200 with Jonny Kest in 2010, RYT-500 with Saundarya O'Connell in 2015, Reiki I and II in 2004 with Ray Golden and Reiki III Master Level in 2017 with Frans Steine, Birth and Postpartum Doula training in 2016 with DONA and ProDoula, and is the owner of Verapose Yoga Studio in Dexter, MI since 2015.When she's away from the studio you can find her spending time living in Downtown Dexter with her family of 3 boys, their pound pup Tai-Tai and her husband Mike, whom she met on an adventure in Durango, Colorado. Learn about all the different classes and offerings at Verpose Yoga online at veraposeyoga.com.

**Diarmuid O'Murchu**, a member of the Sacred Heart Missionary Order is a social psychologist and retired missionary. His life and ministry have been devoted to adult faith development.

**Ordained Dharma Teachers** have a minimum of three years of meditation experience.

**John Orr** trained for eight years as a Theravada monk. He is the guiding teacher of New Hope Sangha and longtime teacher with Deep Spring Center.

**Drs. Will and Wendy Page-Echols** are recently retired Integrative Family Medicine physicians and lifetime yoga and meditation practitioners.

**Lisa Patrell** is a Life Coach and LMT. She integrates somatic modalities into coaching sessions and is trained in Craniosacral Therapy, Insight Acupressure, and Reiki.

**Peachtree Yoga, LLC,** is a sister company to Peachtree Wellness, a local holistic trauma practice.

**The Peaceful Dragon School** has provided the self-care practices of Tai Chi, and Qigong since 1990.

**Leslie Pertz** is a LMSW, RYT-200, local psychotherapist with 25 years of yoga practice, and reiki master.

**PKSA Karate Ann Arbor North** is part of the PKSA Karate family of Tang Soo Do schools.

**JT Quon** has been practicing yoga since the late 90s and teaching yoga since 2006. She develops classes that help students cultivate mindfulness, compassion, and release tension.

**Rocky Shadowbear Rains**, folk magician, shamanic practitioner, and druid is a member of the AODA and is the founder of the Wyldwoode School of the Magikal Artes.

**Judy Ramsey** is an approved instructor for Sandra Ingerman's courses. She offers shamanic healing for and mentoring for humans and more-than-humans.

**Chris Ratter** is a Psychic Surgeon, author, speaker, and authority on the altered states and trance. He has delivered healing clinics, public demonstrations, and workshops throughout Europe.

**Carmo Ribiera,** originally from Brazil, has been involved in Tai-Chi since the opening of Imagine Fitness and Yoga.

**Demo Rinpoche** is Jewel Heart's Resident Spiritual Advisor. He studied under the supervision of the Dalai Lama and holds the highest monastic degree of Geshe Lharampa.

**Gelek Rimpoche** was the Founder and Spiritual Director of Jewel Heart.

## Writers Wanted

***Great way to be visible in the community, and connected.***

We are always looking for good articles about the holistic scene…
reportage, personal journaling and essays, profiles, interviews, journalistic explorations,and other feature writing.

Modest but respectable pay. If you might be interested, please send a letter of interest and links or PDF samples of previously published writing to jennifer@crazywisdom.net.

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Crazy Wisdom's E-Blast Service is a great way to showcase yourself, your business and your services! This service is a cost effective method of reaching a targeted audience without the need for investment in costly hardware and mail related software!

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# Where Do We Distribute The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal?

**6,500 copies of *The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal* are distributed to more than 235 locations in the Ann Arbor area, including Crazy Wisdom Bookstore, Castle Remedies at the Parkway Center, Kerrytown, Schuler Books, the Zen Temple, Sweetwaters, Michigan Union, the Better Health Store, North Campus Commons, U-M, EMU, WCC, Arbor Farms, the Center for Sacred Living, Complete Chiropractic, the Lighthouse Center, Jewel Heart, Tsogyelgar, York, Argus Farm Stop, Michigan Theater, Seva, Booksweet, Clark Pharmacy, and the Weber Center.**

**We also distribute to the offices of dozens of doctors, holistic health care providers and therapists.**

**If you'd like us to bring copies of The CW Community Journal to your office, studio or center, please email: bill@crazywisdom.net.**


# TEACHERS, LECTURERS, WORKSHOP LEADERS & THE CENTERS

## *continued...*

**David Rosenberg** is a certified Iyengar yoga instructor who has been teaching since 1993. He traveled to Pune, India in 1996 to study from the Iyengars.

**Dr. Michaelene Ruhl, PsyD**, is a transpersonal psychologist with 15+ years' experience. She blends clinical expertise and compassion to guide healing through private sessions, workshops, trainings, and retreats.

**Merilynne Rush**, MSHP, BSN, former home birth midwife and hospice nurse, provides comprehensive natural death care consulting. She has been training EOL doulas since 2016.

**Hartmut Sagolla** has been studying Tibetan Buddhism for over 30 years. Since 2002, he has served as a Program Director at Jewel Heart.

**Swami Sankarananda** is a simple pilgrim of peace and a servant of God in our path of awakening to the One Truth.

**Caitie Shaughnessy**, E-RYT 200, RYT 500, has been teaching yoga in Ann Arbor since 2007.

**Jadal Tulku Lobsang Sherap** was recognized by the 100th Ganden Tripa and His Holiness the Dalai Lama in 1999. He has studied at Drepung Loseling Monastery.

**Anat Shlagman**, Traditional Naturopath, developed a unique session to relax your nervous system.

**Susan Slack** is a Certified Dances of Universal Peace leader, serving over four decades.

**Colette Simone** holds a doctorate in Clinical Psychology and a master's in music. Drawn to the Ra Material and Aaron, she joined Deep Spring Center in 2017.

**Steiner Health** is a medical non-profit specializing in anthroposophical medicine.

**Strawbale Studio**: enchanting buildings and an earth oven on rural wooded land one hour North of Detroit.

**Haju Sunim** is a fully transmitted zen teacher with over 40 years of experience.

**Theatre NOVA's** mission is to raise awareness of the value and excitement of new plays and playwrights.

**Dr. Greta Uehling** is a cultural anthropologist and author focused on Indigenous and Eastern European studies; she teaches and consults at UofM on migration, human rights, and conflict.

**Rory Walsh** has nine years of experience and is a certified Qigong instructor trained by Master Wasentha Young of the Peaceful Dragon School.

**Joe Walters** has been a practitioner of Tai Chi for 31 years.

**Matt Watroba** is the producer and host of the "Folks Like Us" program, and the nationally syndicated "Sing Out Radio Magazine" and "Folk Alley", on Detroit Public Radio (WDET).

**Suzy Wienckowski**, Reiki Master, has been teaching Reiki for 30 years. She has studied with Masters trained by Hawayo Takata and with Hiroshi Doi of Japan.

**Eve Wilson** is a UCM Master Healer, Reverend, World Healing and Ascension Leader, International Award-Winning Author, and blogger.

**Swami Yatidharmananda** is a monk from India and is the founder of Swami Chidananda Sevashram.

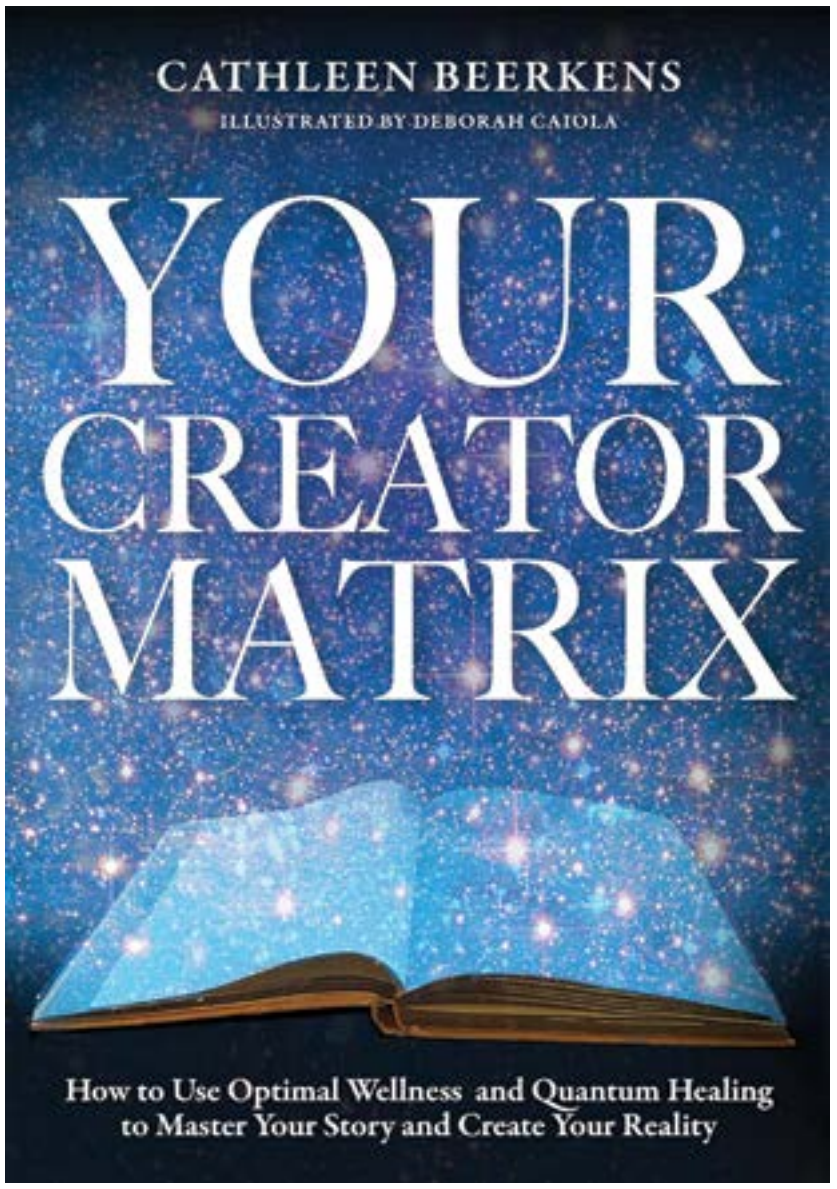
**Yeshua** came forth 2,000 years ago with a specific task and is an expression of divine love and light, embodying a clear, high vibrational presence.

**Wasentha Young** is a Master of Tai Chi and Qigong. She has also received formal instruction in Buddhist and Taoist mindful meditation styles.

**Mari Ziolkowski**, MSW and Ph.D. in Feminist Spirituality, has been initiated in Tantric Hindu traditions, Q'ero, and Rainbow medicine lineages of the Peruvian High Andes.

**Celeste Zygmont** has been active with Deep Spring Center for 30 years, serving as teacher, board member, and meditation facilitator. She offers Dharma teachings and meditation guidance.

Book Review


CATHLEEN BEERKENS
ILLUSTRATED BY DEBORAH CAIOLA
YOUR CREATOR MATRIX
How to Use Optimal Wellness and Quantum Healing to Master Your Story and Create Your Reality

# Your Creator Matrix: How to Use Optimal Wellness and Quantum Healing to Master Your Story and Create Your Reality

*by Cathleen Beerkens*

By Christine MacIntyre

*Your Creator Matrix* by author Cathleen Beerkens blends deep personal insight with cutting-edge science to offer a roadmap for taking control of your story and reprogramming your reality in the process.

At its core, the book is about discovering that the patterns shaping your life aren't just "who you are," instead, they're often unconscious loops you can change. Beerkens introduces the "creator matrix": a multilayered system that includes our biology (such as nutrition, movement, and rest), emotions, beliefs, and even the quantum field of possibility. The way she celebrates each layer stands out—nothing is dismissed as fluff, and nothing is treated as purely mechanical. It's an integrated model that melds mind, body, and beyond.

Beerkens writes like a friend who's been through the trenches. Drawing on her background in human health and health education, she shares her struggles with burnout, healing, and recalibrating a life that once felt off course. Her message is compelling: she's not preaching from a mountaintop; she's been in the valley, too.

What makes the book rousing and occasionally surprising is how she grounds everything in science. Forget platitudes; there's real biology and quantum physics embedded, explained clearly and with relatable analogies. She illustrates how beliefs can influence gene expression, why breathwork can shift brainwaves, and how personal stories can coat neurons with their own "sticky" patterns.

In the opening chapter, Beerkens provides readers with a tool they can use immediately: the power of perception. She writes, "I learned that my thoughts and feelings were powerful, and that, when I chose a more positive way of thinking, I was exercising my power to create a more positive and exciting life—and certainly a more 'expanded' life…". It's a powerful entry point into a book that's ultimately about self-liberation.

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Throughout, readers are offered try-it-now material—micro-movements to energize the body, breathing rituals, belief-reframing self-talk, and more. These are small, doable practices woven into the content, not just abstract theories. For example, "Eating high-frequency foods with life force is important to rejuvenate our bodies and restore our frequency." Science tells us, writes Beerkens, that our brains are capable of adapting to new activities and environmental changes. "As we grow in consciousness, we discover that we have a choice as to which neural pathways to strengthen via consciously repeating choices of thoughts, behaviors, and habits…."

What makes the book rousing and occasionally surprising is how she grounds everything in science. Forget platitudes; there's real biology and quantum physics embedded, explained clearly and with relatable analogies.

The book introduces several tools and frameworks that deepen self-awareness, including the Enneagram, the Seven Chakras, epigenetics, the Wellness Wheel, and even quantum mechanics. While the quantum material, such as non-local consciousness or field theory, may feel abstract at times, she enriches these ideas with real-life stories of people who've shifted chronic pain, anxiety, or stuck emotional energy. This approach makes the more expansive ideas feel achievable, not out of reach.

Ultimately, *Your Creator Matrix* offers a thoughtful balance grounded enough for skeptics but open-hearted enough for spiritual seekers. The chapters build on one another, forming a cohesive picture of healing and transformation through the connected layers of self.

Readers who have felt stuck in habits or narratives that no longer serve them will appreciate this book as it acts as a toolkit for change. It invites us to stop reacting to life and to start consciously co-creating it.

# What's It Like to Be an Animal Communicator?

By Peggy River Singer

About twenty years ago, my cat Melissa was dying of kidney disease. I was desperate to save her, not ready to let her go. Finally, I decided to find out what *she* wanted to do. I needed to hear her tell me that it was time for her to leave, so I wouldn't drown in my own guilt by having her put to sleep.

A veterinary assistant gave me the name of a local psychic. This was after closing the door to our exam room so we wouldn't be overheard. Clearly, that sort of woo-woo New Age hippy nonsense was not welcome in this modern veterinary hospital.

**A veterinary assistant gave me the name of a local psychic. This was after closing the door to our exam room so we wouldn't be overheard. Clearly, that sort of woo-woo New Age hippy nonsense was not welcome in this modern veterinary hospital.**

The psychic told me Melissa was holding on for my sake. Hearing that gave me the courage to request euthanasia, and I held her in my arms as she drifted away.

Naturally enough, I very much wanted to be able to do what the psychic did so effortlessly. I took classes from her and Judy Ramsey in Chelsea, among other teachers. At first, I used pendulums to get answers from animals. It was a long time before I could hear animals' voices, and I think that was because I embodied such deep levels of trauma from a difficult childhood. As I gradually cleared and released that trauma, it became easier for animals to connect with me, and everything developed from there.

My first real conversation was when I started talking to a squirrel one day to practice my new skills. He interrupted with, "Don't just waltz in here and start talking, that's rude! Be. *Become*. Then *ask* if someone wants to talk." He flicked his tail and departed, and I saw the name Tuu-Liss in my mind.

**My first real conversation was when I started talking to a squirrel one day to practice my new skills. He interrupted with, "Don't just waltz in here and start talking, that's rude! Be. Become. Then ask if someone wants to talk."**

Animals live in a world of energy, and I've learned how important it is to be aware of my own energy during communication sessions. When Tuu-Liss told me to "be" and "become" that day, he meant that I should settle my energy until it became comfortably compatible with the peaceful energy of that moment in that place, as well as his own energy, before I went any further; and I'm still following his advice today.

When I connect with an animal, it's like when you plug in a cord and feel it settle into the socket. The animal's voice in my head sounds like my own voice; so, I need to be constantly alert to whether I'm hearing the animal's words, or my own thoughts. Departed animals do tend to have more "sparkle" in their energies; otherwise, it feels just like talking with living animals.

When I introduce myself to wild animals, I use the name River (a name animals can connect with). Years ago, I said "good morning!" to a Marsh Hawk perched on a telephone pole on West Stadium in Ann Arbor. What I heard back was alien-sounding noises; then the hawk figured out how to match its energies to mine and began to speak in English. We had a pleasant conversation about what a beautiful morning it was, and she told me that she was sunning herself before hunting for her breakfast.

I often call on an animal's Higher Self or their personal angel during readings. This worked beautifully for an elderly dog with advanced dementia; and for a ram who had become dangerous because he was no longer sane. Several departed animals also help me with readings; recently, some gnomes and fairies offered to help with wild animals.

### COMMON SITUATIONS I WORK WITH

Lots of animal behavioral and health issues are rooted in their humans' unacknowledged traumas, fears, and anxieties. One cat repeatedly tore up the carpet in a closet: she was sending the message that Mom needed to look into a "dark corner" of her memories to heal an issue that was holding her back from being her best self. Another cat was unable to urinate. She had trained her body to be unable to release old toxic energies to express that concept to her mom. It's also common for animals to take in illnesses from their humans and process those illnesses in their own bodies, as several of my own animals have done.

**Anxious animals can be empowered by learning to approach their fears in a new way.**

Domestic animals live their lives according to choices made by humans, which is necessary for the animal's welfare but doesn't allow them full autonomy of expression on every level of their being-ness. I consider animals to be sentient beings with free will, who can make their own decisions. I tell new animal clients their human will hear everything we talk about, and that if the animal isn't interested in finding solutions to problems, I'll cancel the session. Giving them the freedom to choose usually dissolves barriers and changes lives. And just like for humans, an opportunity to express griefs and grievances can result in tremendous healing.

Anxious animals can be empowered by learning to approach their fears in a new way. Cuba the cat was terrified of plastic bags, so I suggested he look at those plastic bags objectively and acknowledge that they were part of everyday life with humans, and they couldn't hurt him. I encouraged him to practice what he would do the next time he was startled by a bag's rustling sound or unexpected movement: "Oh, that's just one of those bags and it startled me, that's

perfectly okay." This new outlook resulted in a very happy message from Cuba's Mom about her calmer and more confident cat!

Another client asked me to try to stop her dog from stealing food at family picnics. The dog told me how much fun it was when people chased him. I said, "Okay, but it probably took a long time to make that food, and your family was looking forward to eating it. When you steal the food, the whole meal is ruined, and everyone is very disappointed."

The dog told me he was bored and just wanted to liven things up. I shared his point of view with his owners and asked them to help the dog get much more exercise, including something like a backyard agility course to challenge both mind and body.

I had a session with a very fearful cat recently that will give you an idea of some of the extraordinary things I've heard from animal clients. I asked the cat if anything had happened in her life that was so frightening that it's still bothering her.

She responded, "I see your idea, not in this life but in several recent lifetimes. It seems that I have chosen and planned these experiences so that my different human families can help me with them. Each of those lifetimes has offered a step forward toward a more balanced life. This is the last lifetime where I will need this kind of help, which will be offered by you at the request of my humans. Picture this process as a great big circle with different families along the way, and today the two ends of the circle unite, and the cycle is complete. There are no coincidences, you see."

### CAN ANYBODY DO ANIMAL COMMUNICATION?

I'm convinced that all humans have natural psychic abilities, but those abilities are often squashed during childhood so kids will fit in and "act normal." I started reading science fiction at 11-years-old (*A Wrinkle in Time*) and I've been eagerly open-minded to all kinds of wonders and mysteries my whole life, which has definitely been helpful. But I don't remember anything like psychic abilities until I got into animal communication in my 60s, and that's okay. Everyone develops their abilities at the pace that's right for them.

**Center yourself, calm your energies, breathe, open your heart until it fills with sunshine and love, introduce yourself to that squirrel raiding your bird feeder and see what happens.**

Do you need to take classes and read books and work hard to connect with animals? Classes and books are great, but the harder you *try* to connect with an animal the less success you'll probably have because the energy of your *wanting and trying* can feel like *taking or capturing* to an animal. Center yourself, calm your energies, breathe, open your heart until it fills with sunshine and love, introduce yourself to that squirrel raiding your bird feeder and see what happens. And the first time you connect I hope you'll feel that thrill of awe and wonder, as I still do even after all these years!

*Peggy River Singer is a Pleiadian Starseed, Lightworker, all-beings communicator, faerie ally, and lifelong writer. More of her articles and channelings are posted on angelsfairiesandlife.wordpress.com. To ask about a reading, please call 734-548-0194.*


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# How One Sentence in an 800-Page Book Changed My Practice:

## An Interview with Benebell Wen

**By Leif Laufeyjarsen**

In an age of bite-sized disposable bits of information, and fleeting content, Benebell Wen's work is a welcome anomaly best approached with a quiet space and a cup of tea. Her idea of "basic" is anything but, and I've learned to only dive into her writing when I'm ready to fully absorb deeply layered, carefully constructed thought.

Despite her impressive work in both Tarot and I Ching, she is profoundly humble. Whether on the page or in person, she is grounded, unassuming, and kind. Although she can hold a firm boundary when the need arises, at her core she is an introvert who wants to positively impact the world we all live in.

**Leif Laufeyjarsen:** You've spoken about the challenges of living in a country where you are perceived as foreign because of how you look, and of being a woman in a male-dominated field (law, not tarot). Do you think navigating that liminal space has shaped any particular strengths or perspectives?

**Benebell Wen:** One strength that develops is never settling for "just as good" and knowing you have to strive for "twice as good" just to be viewed as equal. It's funny, because the neurodivergent magically-inclined experience is the same—you need to be "twice as normal presenting" to be viewed as normal. And I think there will always be an internal struggle around assimilation and integration, and this applies to anyone who is marginalized in any way, including those practicing forms of alternative spirituality.

Also, the marginalized experience can lead you to either cultivate more grace for those who don't see things the way you see them, or it can lead to anger and resentment, and occultists—those who navigate liminal spaces—deal with that same challenge, and same choice in attitude.

In an age of bite-sized disposable bits of information, and fleeting content, Benebell Wen's work is a welcome anomaly best approached with a quiet space and a cup of tea.

**Leif Laufeyjarsen:** All three of your books are epic in scope—the shortest still clocks in at over 600 pages. Is there anything in your background that drives you to be so thorough?

**Benebell Wen:** Maybe it's not so much being thorough as it is a defect in my writing skills–I tend to be too wordy. You get me started on a topic I'm passionate about, and I can just talk, and talk, write and write, and I only realize I may have a word count problem when I go to save the document, and it takes longer to load because the file size has gotten so big.

**Leif Laufeyjarsen:** In your book *Holistic Tarot*, you emphasize that there's no single "true" method of reading—only what works for each reader. How did you come to this view, and has it changed over time?

**Benebell Wen:** I came to that view from years of studying different methods, and practicing tarot interpretation through different lenses of tradition, from being immersed in the tarot community and seeing how different readers use different methods with different cards differently, and all still found the clarity and self-actualization they sought.

In tarot, the right method is the one that gets you to self-empowerment. Like philosophy, there's no single "true" school of thought, only the one that helps you to best explore life's big questions and better understand yourself and the world around you.

**Leif Laufeyjarsen:** One of your most impactful ideas, for me, is that tarot should empower. Do you see that same principle applying to your other practices, like I Ching, astrology, or numerology?

**Benebell Wen:** Absolutely. No matter the system, whether it's tarot, the I Ching, or astrology, the goal should be to empower. I approach these systems as tools for helping us to know thyself, to help us assess the pros and cons, risks and potential gains of a decision we're contemplating, and most importantly, to enable us to take control of our lives.

I'm not opposed to predicting the future or seeing far back into some mystically shrouded purported past, so long as the output directs us toward self-actualization and making the most out of this life we've been given.

"In tarot, the right method is the one that gets you to self-empowerment. Like philosophy, there's no single "true" school of thought, only the one that helps you to best explore life's big questions and better understand yourself and the world around you."

-Benebell Wen

Thus, when I talk about not using the tarot for mere fortune-telling, I'm saying these systems have so much more to offer us than just predicting outcomes. They're designed to help you think more clearly and see the bigger picture, so you can take empowered action. Also, it's like asking, "Do elephants have tusks?" when your objective was to understand the whole elephant, when you could have asked, "Show me the elephant and tell me everything I need to know about the elephant" so that you can then make your own assessments of said elephant.

These aren't systems designed for predictions only, although they certainly do seem to deliver that quite effectively. They're about helping you to see patterns and from spotting the patterns, understand deeper truths. If I'm being candid, anytime I see someone approaching tarot or I Ching as a fortune-telling device, it's like watching someone drive a Ferrari at 10 mph in a parking lot and exclaiming, "Look what this Ferrari can do!"

**Leif Laufeyjarsen:** You have also mentioned that tarot should be used responsibly, especially when someone might be vulnerable. What are your thoughts on casual readers who read only for themselves or friends? Would you give any words of encouragement to a beginner or casual reader? Any warnings?

**Benebell Wen:** Words hold so much power. Phrasing is determinative. Cases are won or lost, lives changed, and fates decided based on how something is said. In contract drafting, two ways of saying the same thing (you think) can lead to the difference of millions of dollars in cost. Me, personally, I think it is only responsible to approach even casual tarot readings in a mindful way, especially when someone is vulnerable and sincerely looking for guidance. How many times has someone's casual, thoughtless words gotten seared into your long-term memory and decades later you still remember those words, but when asked, that person can't even remember they spoke to you?

Every one of us seasoned tarot readers were once casual readers reading for ourselves and friends. That's where you begin. Not only is that okay, that's just how it is. To navigate the beginner's journey with grace, though, I think we need

to have enough humility to say to a querent, "I don't know" or "I'm not sure" as you work through interpreting a card.

As a tarot reader, you become by virtue of your role a key touchpoint in someone's life, like a coach, counselor, advisor, a best friend, an auntie or uncle. We all go through difficult times. When you are at your lowest, feeling your worst and most defeated, the phrasing of what someone says to you can make the difference between you unearthing the inner strength to dig yourself out of your hole or staying defeated. The fortune-teller can see in the cards, "bad times are coming." The type of tarot reader that makes a difference in this world and changes lives will say, "A storm is brewing, and this is how you prepare for it so you mitigate damage, and perhaps even come out on top. Let me give you the instructions on how to build yourself a shelter."

Ultimately, though, I say you don't need psychic ability or academic training to be a good friend. So, to the casual tarot reader, as you approach reading cards for someone, just remember to be a good friend.

"As a tarot reader, you become by virtue of your role a key touchpoint in someone's life, like a coach, counselor, advisor, a best friend, an auntie or uncle. We all go through difficult times. When you are at your lowest, feeling your worst and most defeated, the phrasing of what someone says to you can make the difference between you unearthing the inner strength to dig yourself out of your hole or staying defeated."

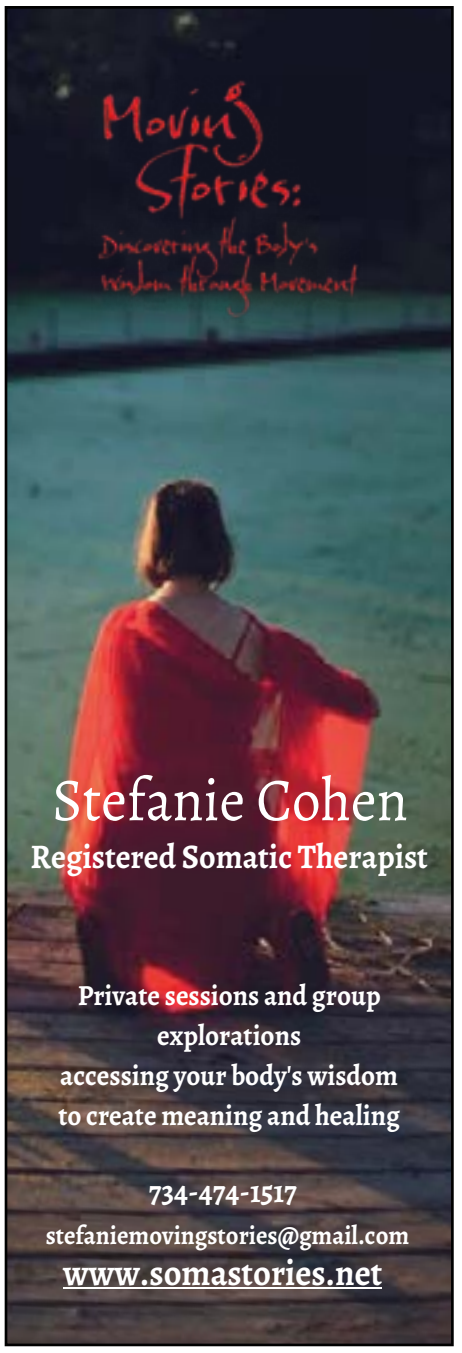
–Benebell Wen

**Leif Laufeyjarsen:** You often say you're not a teacher—but if we teach through our actions, what do you think others might be learning from yours?

**Benebell Wen:** We learn from every encounter, every type of person, and any individual you have an exchange with has something to teach you. That doesn't make them a teacher, at least not in the highly regarded and qualified sense the role of a teacher deserves. Teachers owe a duty to their students, which is why students owe reverence to their teachers. That's not the relationship anyone should be having with me. The karmic responsibility of a spiritual teacher is even weightier, and sacred. That's just not me, over here cussing like a sailor, enjoying fine-dining, food, and wine, and gossiping with friends over sushi. I hope I'm more like a friend or sister, just one who happens to have a know-it-all attitude (as most sisters do).

Nonetheless what do I think others might be learning through my actions? That's a great question. As someone who is *not* a teacher, I haven't really thought about that. I'm not thinking about what people can learn from my actions; I'm thinking about whether my actions are aligned with my true north, am I being ethical and moral, am I being kind and compassionate, am I helping or am I hurting, am I performing or is this really true to me? Basically, I'm too self-centered to be a teacher.

*Benebell Wen is the author of three books:* Holistic Tarot, The Tao of Craft, *and* I Ching, The Oracle*, all available through Crazy Wisdom. She has also created a tarot deck, which is sold out at the time of writing. You can learn more about her and explore her many resources—many of which are free—online at benebellwen.com.*



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# Astrologically Speaking

## The Four Elements in Astrology: Fire, Earth, Air, and Water

By Catherine Carlson

A simple way to understand the language of astrology is to view the twelve signs according to the element they represent: Fire, Earth, Air, or Water. We all understand what these elements look, and feel like, and we rely on them to live.

In her book, *The Missing Element,* astrology teacher Debra Silverman discusses how we all have one or two elements that are less represented in ourselves and invites us to develop those in order to find balance. As you read the signs associated with each element you can easily get a sense of which elements you most embody, and which elements could bring more harmony to your life.

### FIRE SIGNS:

Bright, hot, fun, exciting, smoky, magnetic, compelling, or dangerous. Do you know someone who likes to start debates (has a lot of fire!) or, alternatively, someone who has lost their inspiration (lacking fire)? Fire represents energy, passion and inspiration. Famous fire signs: Conan O'Brien, Madonna, Steven Spielberg.

Aries the Ram: Head-ruled Aries "rams" or you could say kick starts the twelve zodiac signs with a spark, setting the rest in motion. It is the most energetic of the fire signs and the sign associated with the athlete, assertiveness, and competition much like its ruling planet—Mars.

Leo the Lion: Leo energy has the magnetic quality of the brightest fire. It can be fun and childlike or dramatic and captivating like a roaring lion. Like it's ruler the Sun, it brings people together to celebrate. Leo rules the heart and is the most passionate of the fire signs.

Sagittarius the Centaur: The fiery energy of Sagittarius seems limitless. Ruled by larger-than-life Jupiter, Sagittarius has an adventurous nature and desire to expand beyond boundaries. This one most embodies the fiery traits of fun and excitement!

### EARTH SIGNS:

Reliable, steady, slow, practical, grounded, hard, or soft. Do you know someone who has an abundance of earth, always working or volunteering? On the flip side, someone who lacks earth can be disorganized. Earth represents the here and now, what we can see and touch. Earth signs tend to focus on food, money, tasks, work, nature, animals, and day-to-day living. Famous Earth signs: Cher, Mother Teresa, Muhammad Ali.

Taurus the Bull:

The first earth sign, Taurus is very connected to nature, gardening, and values. Taurus can move turtle-slow and be stubborn. This sign is ruled by Venus and is most likely to be called "Material Girl," as it values money and beauty as well as all the sensory earthly experiences—tastes, smells, and luxurious fabrics.

Virgo the Virgin:

All about service and purification of our earthy life from the physical body to the home, Virgo tends toward perfectionism and worry. Extremely detail oriented, many Virgos work in healthcare or food related fields and are very good with animals.

Capricorn the Water Goat: Capricorn's earthly energy is aligned with work, career, and business. This sign is one of the hardest working. Ruled by Saturn, it understands the payoff through perseverance and wants proof of that success through owning the finest earthly possessions such as a beautiful home, a distinguished car, or multiples of each!

### AIR SIGNS:

Breezy, swift, cool, heady, hot, flowing, stuffy, or forceful. Someone with a lot of air can be easy to talk to. Someone who rarely speaks can have a lack of the air element. Air people are movers and schmoozers, with a focus on communication, travel, the mind and intellect. Famous air signs: Prince, Julie Andrews, Galileo.

Gemini the Twins: Gemini is breezy, light, and fast. A natural interviewer, Gemini loves to ask questions. It can appear fickle, like a child who moves quickly from one gift to the next shiny new toy. Gemini's twin energy means it can be of two minds about things and unable to commit to a favorite (restaurant, team, etc.). These are the readers and lifelong students, absorbing information like a sponge.

Head-ruled Aries "rams" or you could say kick starts the twelve zodiac signs with a spark, setting the rest in motion.

Libra the Scales: Libra is always moving in the direction of balance seeking love and harmony, especially in relationship with another person, and in their dress and decor. They are easygoing, peace-seeking, and inspire us to be softer in our communication.

Aquarius the Water Bearer: Aquarius is the sign of the genius as it takes mental activity to a higher level. The air energy is constantly flowing both into the mind and out of it. They can get mental downloads out of nowhere. This is the sign of someone who can not only understand complex ideas, but also invent complex mechanisms.

### WATER SIGNS:

Flowing, stagnant, turbulent, deep, constant, and any temperature from frozen to boiling hot! Do you know someone who always cries at weddings or someone who lacks water and never sheds a tear? Water represents the emotional realm, intuition, feelings and memories. Famous water signs: Princess Diana, Leonardo DiCaprio, Einstein.

Cancer the Crab: We begin life in water and Cancer is the sign of the nurturing mother. Just as a crab seeks comfort along the rocky shore, this sensitive and sometimes moody sign likes to be at home with all the creature comforts where it's safe. Like all water signs, this one requires time alone to restore itself from interacting with the outside world. Ruled by the moon, Cancerian types are most likely to give or need a hug.

Scorpio the Scorpion: Scorpios have an amazing capacity to go into the deeper emotional realms. These are the investigators comfortable with the darker side of life. There is a lot going on beneath the surface of this water sign such as secrets and ancestral knowledge. They are exceptionally resilient but have their limits.

Pisces Two Fish (swimming in opposite directions): Pisces is the most empathic of the water signs. It is so connected to everything it sometimes doesn't know where they end and another begins. It can feel overwhelming or emotionally flooded. This abundance of water makes them exceptionally intuitive, and some have a talent for the refined arts: classical music, ballet, architecture, and fashion design.

*Catherine Carlson is an Astrologer who offers consultations for adults and children. She is an Ann Arbor native who enjoys living locally with her family. She can be reached at catherine-carlson.com or catenka@mac.com.*

# A Magical Road Trip
## Across Michigan

By Catherine Carr

I remember how at home I felt the first time I walked into World Tree Healing. I'd grown up in a conservative religious culture where people looked at me like I was crazy if I talked about my spiritual experiences. The people around me didn't seem to sense natural energies in the same way I did and considered belief in such energies heretical. They warned me against investigating the spiritual arts or other religions on the ground that these would open me up to demonic influence.

Imagine my surprise, then, when I walked into this Chicago metaphysical shop a friend had referred me to and saw runes on the wall. Runes were my language: I'd learned them out of fantasy books, then learned that they were a real writing system used in Scandinavia before Christianity. I had always found writing in them therapeutic, and I had always gotten weird looks for it. But there they were written on the window and the walls.

I walked up to the counter and asked for a specific tarot deck. I'd accidentally purchased the guide for the deck, thinking it was a standalone book a few weeks earlier. The woman behind the counter stopped what she was doing and stared at me, then pulled the deck I needed out of her bag.

"This is mine. I was just debating whether to sell it. I guess we were meant to meet each other today."

Thus began my relationship with a store that would introduce me to a community of people who understood me on this deep level for the first time and open my door to a national community of like-minded spiritual seekers.

There's a saying that metaphysical shops serve almost as places of worship for people of alternative spiritualities.

There's a saying that metaphysical shops serve almost as places of worship for people of alternative spiritualities. Without a tithing base, spaces for teaching spiritual arts and knowledge often need a commercial front to finance their public spaces. Almost every metaphysical store also serves as a community hub where people meet each other, support each other, and often feel truly seen for the very first time.

Crazy Wisdom in Ann Arbor is one such space, with its extensive library of books and its event space serving as a community hub for spiritual and magical groups. Here I'll share my travels to four more such venues across Michigan and give a shout-out to four others I was unable to visit during my first cross-Michigan magical road trip.

## Keys to Manifestation, Lansing

One thing I did not expect was for Lansing to feel so much like downtown Ann Arbor. I knew both cities were about the same size, but I didn't expect both to have such similar university town feels, or to see many of the same chain restaurants and coffee shops on its main street. Lansing even boasts a Pinball Pete's location (a beloved Ann Arbor staple I've never seen in another city). But that's not the reason I came here: I came for Keys to Manifestation.

I first learned about Keys to Manifestation from people in one of my online religious communities. I was especially delighted because I didn't know of any members of this online community in Michigan, and apparently there were some in Lansing. What I discovered was a vibrant magical community committed to accessibility and the support of Michigan families.

When I walked in the door, owner Solinox Glantzberg greeted me, their forehead painted with a crescent. "We're so glad you could come," they say. Nearby, a teenager is sitting at a low table, eating. Customers are browsing rows and rows of shelves filled with books, crystals, incense, and candles.

Keys to Manifestation boasts free parking and extensive retail and event space. A large library of magical and spiritual books are arrayed on shelves along the walls, with stands and counters offering crystals, candles, incense, and ritual tools across the store. The main room and adjacent rooms host event spaces where book signings, classes, spiritual services, and community rituals are held.

# A Magical Road Trip continued...

Keys to Manifestation offers regular offerings of classes, magical learning intensives, and rituals...

A robust community for the spiritual and magical seekers...

Don't miss the chance to try owner Samuel Birkencamp's latest tea-based drink invention!

Keys' robust community support enables them to build family-friendly and disability-accessible space which welcomes spiritual seekers of all stripes. During my visit, I met local graduate students, patrons with a variety of disabilities, and one man who came in off the street saying that a dream had led him to seek out a place like this.

I also ran into staff members of Pagans in Need. This Michigan-based Pagan-run system of food pantries with locations in Lansing, Grawn, Kalamazoo, and Mt. Morris provides food assistance to people regardless of religious affiliation. Its mission is especially important in small towns, where food assistance resources may be limited to just one or two religion-based pantries which may limit food access to those willing to sit through religious sermons.

**What I discovered was a vibrant magical community committed to accessibility and the support of Michigan families.**

Pagans in Need offers food assistance to anyone at physical locations on Sunday mornings or by request through the form on their website. At my visit, I learned that the Lansing location shares space with Keys to Manifestation which is also one of Pagans in Need's corporate sponsors.

In addition to its valuable support for Pagans in Need, Keys to Manifestation offers regular offerings of classes, magical learning intensives, and rituals that provide a robust community for the spiritual and magical seekers. Through their support to Pagans in Need, Keys is also making a difference in the quality of life for people around Michigan.

*Readers who want to hear about Keys to Manifestation's upcoming events may wish to follow the shop on Facebook and Instagram @ManifestLansing. You can visit Keys to Manifestation at 809 Center Street, Suite 7A Lansing, MI 48906 or online at ManifestLansing.com.*

## Cafe Tamaki, Muskegon

Muskegon is a beautiful seaside city. Despite its small size, its culture reminds me of the more youthful urban neighborhoods I've lived in. High-end local coffee shops dot the town, and the local marina hosts yoga classes on the deck of a historic ship anchored in the harbor. It's an increasingly popular city with Michiganders who want the charms of both progressive culture and small-town life.

I am in Muskegon to visit Cafe Tamaki. The first time I met proprietor Samuel Birkenkamp, he was serving tea with a sword on his hip at a steampunk convention. He explained the herbal medicine applications of the tea we were drinking as he served it in Victorian-era porcelain teacups and saucers, and I knew I'd found my new tea supplier.

The Cafe space is cozy, small tables and a couch surrounded by plushies in one corner. As soon as I sit down at a table, earthenware sample cups of drinks appear in front of me. Birkenkamp is here, and he's eager to make sure everyone gets a chance to try his latest tea-based drink invention.

Though not a typical metaphysical shop, Muskegon's Cafe Tamaki now provides space for numerous activities and events, including those of the spiritual

and metaphysical variety. Tamaki serves teas from around the world with a commitment to ethical sourcing and expert brewing to bring out the best flavors of each blend. The menu features in house made tea-based drinks like sodas, smoothies, and mocktails, and unique sweet treats made to complement the flavor profile of its signature tea blends.

*The first time I met proprietor Samuel Birkenkamp, he was serving tea with a sword on his hip at a steampunk convention…As soon as I sit down at a table, earthenware sample cups of drinks appear in front of me. Birkenkamp is eager to make sure everyone gets a chance to try his latest tea-based drink invention.*

Birkenkamp is quick to point out the similarities between tea and wine, where soil, elevation, cultivar, the season of harvest, and the processing of the leaves after harvest all contribute to creating the many unique and complex flavors of tea. From sweet and delicate white teas to smoky fermented pu erhs and caffeine free rooibos, Cafe Tamaki stocks a tea blend for every palette.

Where Tamaki shines most, though, is in its community space. The cafe's sizable event space is a converted greenhouse which hosts regular parties, classes, craft sessions, and community meetings. One of the Cafe's stated missions is to be a sober venue for late-night community life, and it is succeeding in that wildly.

From karaoke and TTRPG nights to tarot salons and a regular Death Cafe discussing end-of-life issues, Tamaki provides space for a rich and varied community life. The cafe hosts regular meetings of local witchcraft groups, and hosts book signings and rituals by magical and spiritual authors.

For those in south and central West Michigan, Cafe Tamaki is more than a place to get unique tasty treats: it's a space offering community and a spiritually open-minded teaching and learning space. Those wishing to stay up-to-date on their upcoming activities may wish to seek out the Cafe's social media presences on Facebook and Instagram. Birkenkamp notes that the event space is always eager to add new offerings and support the local community: Michigan authors, artists, healers, instructors, and anyone else wishing to host an event is encouraged to reach out to cafetamaki@gmail.com.

*Visit Cafe Tamaki at1222 Peck Street in Muskegon, MI, 49442 @CafeTamaki on Facebook and Instagram or online at CafeTamaki.com.*

## Four Directions Alchemy, Ludington

Ludington is a cozy small town on Michigan's west coast. Mostly known for tourism during the summer months, it hosts attractions like cruises on the historic ship S. S. Badger, the hiking trails and dunes of Ludington State Park, and the various historical museums like the Big Sable Point Lighthouse and Historic White Pine Village. It was definitely the smallest town I visited on my road trip with an off-season population of less than 10,000.

I learned about Four Directions Alchemy through the Witches of West Michigan. Tucked away in Ludington, this shop welcomed me in for their annual Samhain celebration. Walking in, I was greeted by a surprisingly spacious expanse of high-end spiritual healing tools. Singing bowls and gongs, some of startling sizes, line the walls and shelves. So do crystals, and an impressive array of jars of herbs on a wall behind the counter. In the back, a curtain separates the main retail space from a private area where healers, coaches, and diviners offer their services. The sweet, spicy scent of hot mulled cider hung in the air emanating from the Samhain snack table.

Owner Sarah Domin described the store as a center for conscious living and spiritual growth for all people. She opened Four Directions Alchemy after an invitation to level up her first career made her realize that she didn't want to stay on that path. Instead, Domin wanted to do something that felt more meaningful: open a spiritual healing and empowerment center in Ludington which at the time had no such resource. She quickly found an enthusiastic community of local people—some of whom told me the shop had given them permission to be their true selves for the first time.

Four Directions hosts events for spiritual seekers and those seeking healing, including Tuesday sound baths, and full moon shamanic journeys. The shop also offers a wide variety of herbs, singing bowls, and other healing and magical supplies. Reiki healings and certifications and courses and coaching programs designed to combat imposter syndrome, help people discover their divine life path and help turn that path into a reality.

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# A Magical Road Trip continued...

The shop has formed a close community of locals. In addition toclasses and healing sessions, it hosts holiday celebrations, book signings, and community rituals. Its annual Samhain "taste of magic" celebration includes seasonal snacks, drinks, and materials for small magical workings.

*Those wishing to keep up with Four Directions' calendar and offerings may wish to subscribe to their email list and follow their active Facebook and Instagram communities @FourDirectionsAlchemy. You can visit Four Directions Alchemy at 507 East Dowland Street in Ludington, MI 49431 or online at FourDirectionsAlchemy.com.*

Tea-shop-turned-community-center, Blessed Be Tea sells a wide range of self-care and magical supplies.

Owner Sarah Domin opened Four Directions Alchemy after an invitation to level up her first career, but she wanted to do something that felt more meaningful.

## Blessed Be Tea, Traverse City

Traverse City is one of Michigan's top seasonal tourist towns. With gorgeous views of the Great Lakes, the lakeside dunes, and the brilliant autumn colors of north Michigan's verdant forests, it has a distinctly Michigan feel. Where else can you have the experience of seaside sand dunes while surrounded by cool breeze and brilliant red, orange, and golden autumn leaves?

I heard about Blessed Be Tea through the grapevine and visited in time to participate in its annual community scavenger hunt. An innovative way for small businesses to support each other, Blessed Be Tea's proprietors had hidden a different ingredient for a spell jar in each of eight nearby local businesses.

Walking into Blessed Be, I was struck by the array of locally made items. Art by local artists hung on the walls as did apparel for sale made by local designers. The standard crystals, candles, incense, and books were joined by shelves stocked with tea blends that had magical and medicinal descriptions.

The woman behind the counter drew my attention to a box of tiny glass jars and a dish of rose petals with a delicate, tiny spoon for scooping. "We're doing a spell charm scavenger hunt," she told me, and handed me a card. "If you visit every business on this list, you can get every ingredient you need to fill up your jar. Then bring it back here and we'll seal it with wax."

Another tea-shop-turned-community-center, Traverse City's Blessed Be Tea sells a wide range of self-care and magical supplies, including tea blends crafted with flavor, herbal healing qualities, and magical qualities in mind. From Demon Detoxes to tea blends formulated for herbal support of various women's health issues, the joint culinary, herbal, and magical knowledge makes these tea blends unique.

The shop's magical, self-care, and community care mission is also supported by its other locally made wares, including herbal bath blends, magical spice and seasoning mixes, jewelry, candles, crystals, spells, and incense. Their themed gift baskets include some of all of the above allowing buyers to give a complete magical self-care experience to loved ones—or themselves.

Like the other venues, it also hosts local events, including community events to mark New Moons, Full Moons, Wiccan holidays, guided meditations, magical rituals, a monthly Dead Poets Society, and a selection of local tarot readers. Last October, if featured a community Ofrenda open from October 1through November 1, inviting patrons to bring images of loved ones to be honored and contribute offerings for the beloved dead.

*The Blessed Be Team maintains a podcast, as well as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube presences to allow those who wish to participate in the community life from home. The shop works with Northern Michigan spiritual practitioners and service providers including the House of Bear Spiritual Sanctuary, social media witch Bellamy Black, and seasoned tarot reader Loreen Muzik. You can visit Blessed Be Tea at 116 East Front Street South Suite, Traverse City, MI 49684. Find them online at @BlessedBeTea on Facebook or @Blessed_Be_Tea on Instagram, or on their website, BlessedBeTea.com.*

## A World of Spirituality

These shops are only a tiny sampling of the metaphysical venues found throughout Michigan. New shops are opening across the state as more and more people find connection, empowerment, and meaning in alternative spiritualities that may not be neatly contained by churches, mosques, or synagogues. Many members of these communities hold dual memberships in Buddhist temples, Hindu ashrams, or indigenous religions which all tend to be open to the spiritual and magical arts in ways that more conservative religious communities may not be.

To honor the shops I was not able to visit on this road trip, here's a selection of local venues which caught my attention but didn't quite fit on my itinerary this time:

- Bloodroot Herb Shop of Ypsilanti. According to their website, Bloodroot offers a wide variety of herbal products including skin care, teas, and tinctures, as well as community care including solstice and equinox celebrations, herbology workshops, and intensives for somatic healing of physical, mental, and spiritual ills. Proprietor Alex Crofoot offers healing consultations, and Blood Root's event space can be reserved for gatherings, classes, and workshops.

- The Crystal Cauldron of Rochester Hills. With a wide selection of herbs, spiritual books, tarot decks, jewelry, and yes, crystals, the Crystal Cauldron is a go-to metaphysical supply store. According to their Facebook page, they host events including Wiccan holiday celebrations, book signings, and book release parties. Facebook is the best way to follow this shop for updates.

- Black Cat Bodega of Grand Rapids. Describing itself as an artisan witchcraft shop, the Black Cat Bodega is also something of a community

center for the Witches of West Michigan and other alternative spirituality groups.

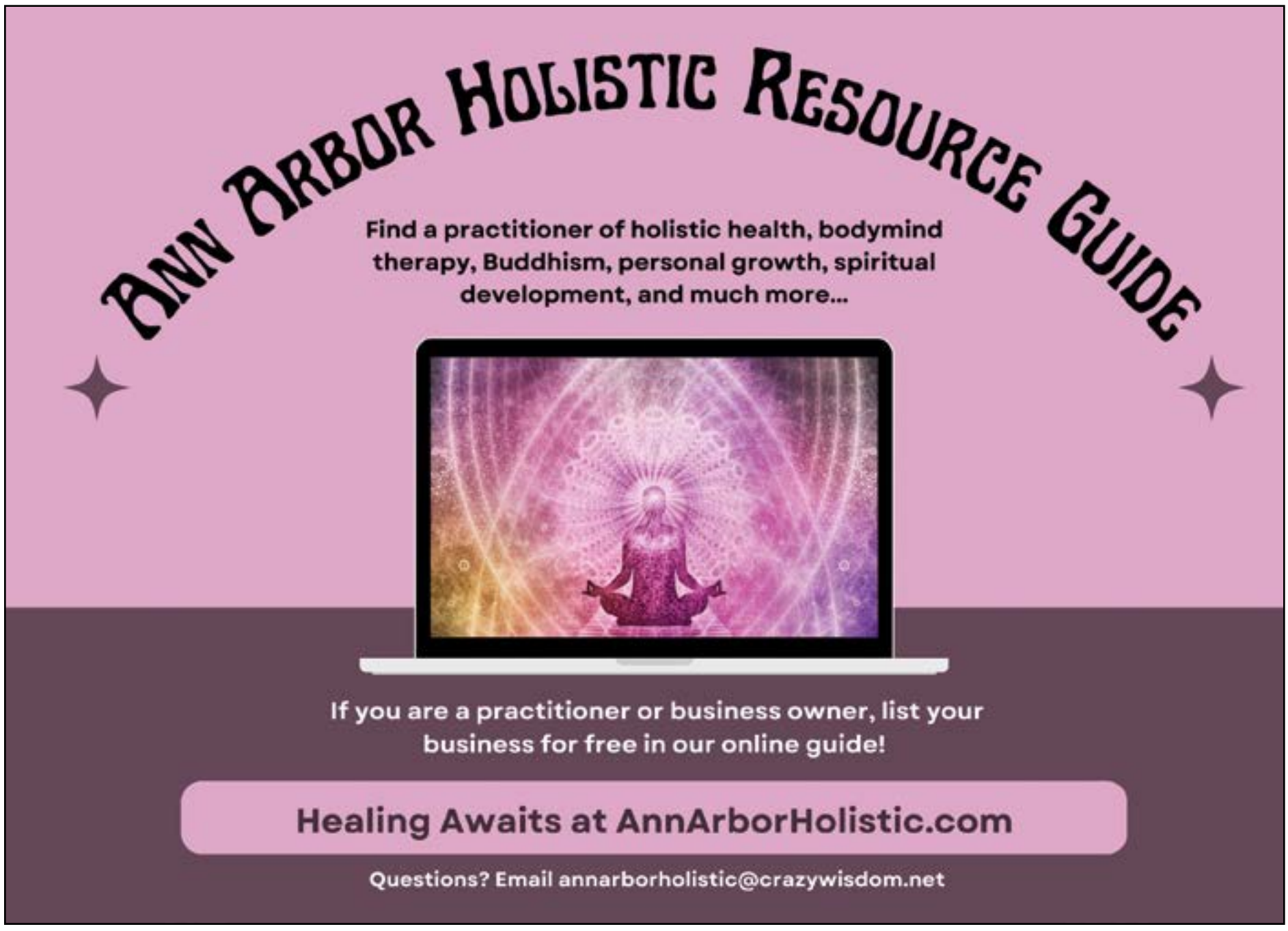
Recently voted the second-best gift shop in West Michigan by a poll of *Revue* readers for the second year running, the shop hosts workshops, book clubs, and a seers' circle for divination enthusiasts. Members of the Black Cat Club subscribe for $9.99 per month to gain access to a magical library space with complimentary tea and beverage service and special store discounts.

- Artes and Craft of Hartford. A hidden gem deep in the countryside of southwestern Michigan. In addition to the usual fare of candles, incense, crystals, and ritual supplies, Artes and Craft stocks rare magical books from UK publishers, an impressive array of 12-15" altar statues, and works with a local metalsmith to produce handmade Druid, Pagan, and Witchcraft jewelry and ritual tools you can't find anywhere else. Like Keys to Manifestation, Artes and Craft is a corporate sponsor of the Pagans in Need food pantry network. You can shop their supplies online at their website and follow their Facebook and Instagram to learn about updates to the inventory.

I've been privileged to grow up in the state of Michigan, whose vibrant cultural tapestry is often underappreciated outside the state. Watching Michigan's metaphysical communities grow, evolve, and multiply over the last decade has been a joy. I can't wait to see what we do next together.

Know of Michigan metaphysical venues I missed? I'd love to hear about them for my next journey! Please send tips to author@catherinecarr.org!

*Catherine Carr is an author, ritual facilitator, and transformation coach originally from Ann Arbor, Michigan. She has spoken at the Parliament of World Religions and written two books: World Soul, Healing Ourselves and the Earth Through Pagan Theology, and Breaking Your Bonds: Finding Freedom Through Adversity. You can follow her work at CatherineCarr.org or find her @authorcatherinecarr on Facebook, Instagram, and Threads.*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# EXPLORING THE MAGIC OF COMMUNITY—
## A LOOK INTO METRO DETROIT'S AUTUMN WITCH GATHERINGS

By Cashmere Morley

To those familiar with the Pagan community, it's well known that Michigan casts a strong and enduring spell when it comes to Pagan gatherings. Whether you're a long-time practitioner of earth-based spirituality, or simply curious about modern witchcraft, you'll find open arms and thoughtful conversation at gatherings like Witches' Night Out, the Witches' Ball, and Pagan Pride events throughout southeast Michigan. These community-driven experiences don't just bring people together, they cultivate shared knowledge, spiritual growth, and a deeper sense of connection.

**Whether you're a long-time practitioner of earth-based spirituality, or simply curious about modern witchcraft, you'll find open arms and thoughtful conversation at gatherings like Witches' Night Out, the Witches' Ball, and Pagan Pride events throughout southeast Michigan.**

Over the past few decades, Ann Arbor has become a small but vibrant hub for modern witches, pagans, and seekers of all kinds. These are not secretive, exclusive circles. Instead, they reflect the values of openness, inclusivity, and mutual support. Whether participants identify as witches, druids, pagans, spiritual humanists, or none of the above, these gatherings offer a space for respectful dialogue, learning, and often, a bit of magic. From drum circles to lectures, seasonal rituals to tarot card discussions, each event is a reflection of the people who show up and share their time and energy.

This article takes a closer look at three of the region's most enduring and beloved gatherings happening this fall, beginning with Witches' Night Out, a free monthly meeting hosted at Crazy Wisdom Bookstore. WNO has been part of Ann Arbor's alternative spiritual fabric for over 30 years. Now coordinated by Moira Finkle, it has grown from a casual meet-up into a dynamic circle of discussion, ritual, and community-building. Finkle emphasized shared leadership and encouraged attendees to bring questions, suggest topics, or even host an evening themselves. The circle is ever-evolving and always open.

We'll also explore the energy and spectacle of The Witches' Ball, an annual celebration of spirit, self-expression, and seasonal magic. Part costumed gala, part community ritual, the ball draws people from across Michigan and beyond. It's a night to revel, to honor ancestral traditions, and to dance in joy and reverence. Organized by Kenya and Kyle Coviak, this event, like so many in the region, reflects a broader mission: to educate, connect, and uplift the wider pagan and spiritual community.

Finally, we'll look at Ann Arbor Pagan Pride which hosts a series of fall events that combine visibility, education, and charity to bring a Pagan event to our neighborhood that is truly magical. Pagan Pride brings witches, and the witch-curious, into the public square breaking down stereotypes and building understanding. Through rituals, workshops, and family-friendly fun, Pagan Pride events remind us that spiritual practice can also be service and that community magic is often the most potent of all.

These autumn Pagan offerings give visitors not just insight into the practice of witchcraft today but into the communal spirit that keeps it thriving. Whether you're a practitioner or a newcomer, these events offer a space where you can learn, question, connect, and grow.

### Witches Night Out

**Unlike some larger local events, WNO is casual, drop-in, free, and requires no commitment. There's no dress code, no vendors, and no live entertainment—just a warm, welcoming space to explore spiritual topics and connect with the community.**

Every second Wednesday of the month, from 6 to 8:00 p.m., a ritual of spiritual exploration, shared learning, and pagan connection unfolds on the second floor of the Crazy Wisdom Bookstore. Witches Night Out (WNO) has been welcoming new and seasoned practitioners alike for over three decades to its circle. Moira Finkle, who currently coordinates the gathering, described it as "an opportunity for people to share knowledge and to get questions answered."

Open to everyone from the curious to the deeply experienced, WNO was originally initiated by a Crazy Wisdom employee as a simple way to gather like-minded individuals. In more recent years, as attendance began to dwindle, Finkle added structure and intention to the format by inviting speakers, creating a conversational circle, and emphasizing inclusivity and communal power. Now, attendance regularly ranges between 20 and 40 participants.

Unlike some larger local events, WNO is casual, drop-in, free, and requires no commitment. There's no dress code, no vendors, and no live entertainment—just a warm, welcoming space to explore spiritual topics and connect with the community. "Relaxed" is the word Finkle used to describe the atmosphere. Each meeting includes informal chats and open-ended discussion over cookies to cultivate a judgment-free zone for learning and growth in whatever phase of spirituality one may be in.

Each month brings something new. Local witches, artists, and spiritual practitioners are invited to lead presentations on subjects as varied as spell work, devotional practices, spiritual drumming, crafts, and seasonal rituals. One especially memorable evening featured Sundance Living Waters, who led the group in exploring the power of drumming as spiritual practice. "We sat in a full room as we watched someone live their passion," Finkle recalled, "and we all shared in their joy."

There's also space for spontaneous magic at this gathering. "People bring questions and/or requests, and we do our best to respond," said Finkle. Readings, minor rituals, and spell work are often folded into the night's energy. Some attendees simply come to listen and absorb; others are moved to share or participate more deeply.

Though the group doesn't host vendors or sell goods during meetings, WNO has a strong relationship with Crazy Wisdom. Attendees are encouraged to browse the store before or after each gathering, supporting the local independent bookstore that generously hosts the event. Finkle also serves as president of the Magical Education Council (MEC), a nonprofit that organizes additional events like ConVocation, the annual Pagan Picnic, and public rituals many of which are announced at WNO.

Witches Night Out continues to thrive through the passion of its participants and the flexible, inclusive model Finkle has helped cultivate. "It's about shared power," she said. "Everyone brings something to the circle."

*To get involved or stay updated, follow Witches Night Out on Facebook at facebook.com/groups/annarborwitchesnightout.*

## Ann Arbor Pagan Pride

**Ann Arbor Pagan Pride is part of the international Pagan Pride Project, an organization that promotes education, inclusivity, and community engagement for Pagans around the globe.**

Each September, Ann Arbor Pagan Pride brings together witches, druids, and spiritual seekers of all paths for a day of magic, learning, and community. Since 2016, the event has served as a welcoming hub for local Pagans, as well as simply curious minds, offering workshops, rituals, vendors, and family-friendly activities for all. Now in its ninth year, the event continues to grow in size and spirit with this year's theme—"Raising Our Voices: Joy as Resistance"—serving as a powerful call to gather, connect, and celebrate in the face of a challenging world.

Founded by the late Rob Henderson (see the feature including Henderson at issuu.com/cwcommunityjournal/docs/issue_73), Ann Arbor Pagan Pride is part of the international Pagan Pride Project, an organization that promotes education, inclusivity, and community engagement for Pagans around the globe. The local event is run by a small, dedicated team of volunteers and funded entirely through donations, sponsorships, and community support.

Kai Belcher-Ross, one of the organizers of Ann Arbor Pagan Pride, said the event is "about finding the value you bring as you are in your spirituality. It's about finding pride in your knowledge of how the earth moves, how the sea swells, how the stars sing, and how the gods, spirits, and us all weave together. It's about coming together with others who understand and celebrate what we each do in mutual love and respect."

At its heart, Pagan Pride is about fostering a safe and vibrant space for people of all traditions to learn from one another. Attendees can explore a variety of workshops led by local teachers, including hands-on magical techniques, devotional practices, nature walks, and even smaller rituals throughout the day. The event culminates in a large, public ritual, inviting participants to come together and weave shared intention through community magic.

Inclusivity is key: the event is open to all ages with a sensory play area for children and classes accessible to teens and up. New and experienced practitioners alike are welcomed and encouraged to teach, vend, or volunteer creating a dynamic and ever-evolving experience.

While celebration is central, so is service. Entry is donation-based with attendees asked to bring non-perishable food items for Food Gatherers which supports the broader Ann Arbor community. Pagan Pride is also committed to outreach and education responding to misconceptions about Paganism with empathy and openness.

As Belcher-Ross put it, "The point of the event is to provide a space where people can learn and grow together while celebrating what makes us Pagans, while including those that don't know what we're about."

*To get involved or stay updated, visit a2paganpride.com or follow them on Facebook at facebook.com/groups/annarborPaganpride.*

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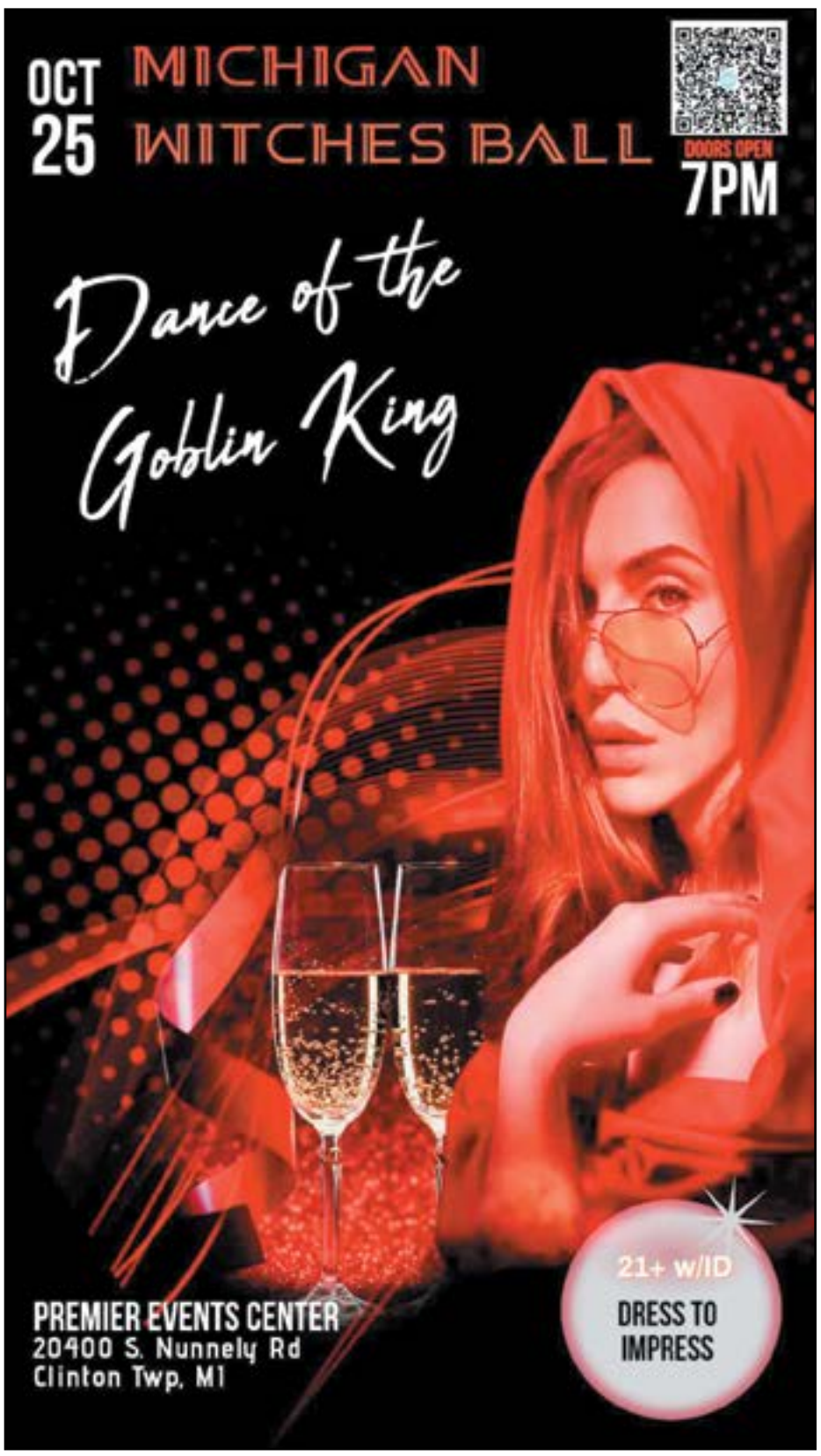
For more information email: Moira Finkel
at mopayne@umich.edu

# EXPLORING THE MAGIC OF COMMUNITY—

## A LOOK INTO METRO DETROIT'S AUTUMN WITCH GATHERINGS




### Witches' Ball

This October, summon a friend and conjure your most bewitching ensemble—the longest running, premier witches ball in the country is opening its doors once again, and there's a ticket with your name on it. Witches, pagans, and spiritual seekers alike will indulge in spirited elixirs from a top-shelf open bar, savor a spellbinding selection of culinary delights, and dance the night away to the theme of "Dance of the Goblin King" at the annual, fully costumed, Michigan Witches Ball.

"It's not trying to be a carnival, just a good time," said Kenya Coviak, an organizer for the event. "We are welcoming of everyone. Leave the politics, worries, and stressors behind once you hit the inside, because this night is magical."

Originally known as the "Pagan Prom," the event began as a grassroots celebration held in a Knights of Columbus' hall and has grown into a vibrant annual tradition. Though its exact founding is rooted in the early work of the group Cov42 and later guided by Gordon Ireland, the Ball has evolved through many incarnations including the Unreal WitchBall and the Midwest Witches Ball. Today, it is organized by Kenya and her husband, Kyle, who are infusing new energy into the event with the help of local vendors and sponsors.

At its core, the Witches Ball is a celebration of Samhain, the season that honors the dead and marks the final harvest. Its mission is twofold: to foster community among diverse spiritual paths and to raise funds for local Pagan charities. Beneficiaries have included Pagans in Need Lansing, Wolf Run Wildlife Spiritual Sanctuary, and the Michigan Pagan Scholarship. The event also maintains strong ties with groups like the Magical Education Council and Spiral Moon Family Circle.

The Ball has grown from a local party into a regional event, welcoming attendees from across the Midwest and even Canada. Traditionally drawing a crowd aged 30 and up, organizers are now intentionally opening the doors to younger generations, with hopes of bringing in more Gen Z and Millennial participants both on the dance floor and in the planning committee. While the daytime Michigan Witches Bazaar offers a family-friendly experience full of eclectic vendors, intuitive readers, and magical wares, the nighttime Ball is strictly for guests 21 and older offering dancing, dining, and mystique. Tickets are $60 a piece, and the event takes place in Clinton Township.

This year, live performances include Lady FireFox, and the Goblin Grrrls, as well as the announcement of Michigan Pagan of the Year. The Ball's 2025 theme, "Dance of the Goblin King," draws inspiration from faerie folklore and the film *Labyrinth*. Guests are encouraged to dress to impress—whether that means fantasy-inspired costumes or elegant evening wear that feels on theme. Still, organizers remain mindful that not all community members can, or want to wear disguises, and that's okay, too.

The event does not affiliate with any one coven or tradition, choosing instead to build bridges across all paths. Looking ahead, the team behind the Ball dreams of securing a permanent venue and welcoming even more diverse voices into its leadership. But one thing remains constant: the Michigan Witches Ball is a night of magic, mischief, remembrance, and renewal—a sacred space where the community comes together to dance with the living and honor the dead.

*For tickets to the Michigan Witches' Ball, visit*

allevents.in/clinton-township/michigan-witches-ball-2025-tickets/80001309983942, or eventbrite.com/e/michigan-witches-ball-tickets-1308629850109. For more information about the ball find it on Facebook @michigan-witches-ball-2025. Find information about the Witches Bazaar on Facebook @michigan-witches-bazaar.

# Five Tales of Ann Arbor's Haunted History

By Crysta Coburn

The city of Ann Arbor has been around for over 200 years. That's more than enough time for tales of the paranormal to manifest. Probably the most famous local spirit is that of Martha Crawford Mulholland, a.k.a. the Dixboro ghost, who is believed to haunt the Dixboro General Store. But she is far from the only ghost story Ann Arbor has to tell.

## Rocket Fizz

The Pratt Block was built in 1896 to be the new factory and headquarters of the Crescent Corset and Clasp Company. The building has been home to multiple residential lofts as well as retail spaces over the years, like Rocket Fizz, a novelty shop specializing in candy and soft drinks that currently occupies part of the main floor.

You might think such a colorful and lighthearted space would be home to the occasional prank. And you'd be right! However, too often when the products fly off the shelves, they are projected not by excited customers but by invisible hands. Sometimes, the store's employees are the unhappy targets. Such occurrences are not limited to the nighttime or when the store is closed, so be on the lookout for flying merchandise on your next visit.

## Downtown Home and Garden

Today, Downtown Home and Garden provides the community with gardening equipment, patio furniture, clothing, and of course plants. But 150 years ago, the building was a supplier of farm goods as well as a livery stable where, much like stowing your car in a parking garage today, you could stable your horse for 10 cents a day. (The basement still smells of horses on a hot day.)

But backstock and remnants of the past are not the only things to be found down there. A small creature that employees have dubbed the gremlin has been spotted now and again. This creature does startle those who see it, but it is not a malevolent being. In fact, it is said to give off a protective aura.

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The gremlin is not the only unexplainable encounter at Downtown Home and Garden. Every day, almost like clockwork, at 4:30 in the afternoon the door to an upstair's artist studio firmly closes whether the resident artist is present or not. The studio was once the office of Emma Hertler, a previous owner of the business that was started in 1906 by her brothers. It is said that 4:30 is when Emma finished up for the day.

According to those in the paranormal field, one type of common ghostly activity is called "residual haunting." The idea is that a location becomes "imprinted" and replays a specific moment over and over again, like a video on repeat. So, Emma's dedication could have left an impression on her environment which continues to go about its business long after the original proprietor has gone.

# Five Tales of Ann Arbor's Haunted History

*continued...*

## Cobblestone Farm

The land that is now Historic Cobblestone Farm has been farmed for two centuries. Dr. Benajah Ticknor built the iconic Classical Revival cobblestone house in the 1840s. The house was purchased by William Campbell in 1881, thus the home is also known as the Ticknor-Campbell House. Since 1972, it has been operated as a pioneer farm museum.

**Ann Arbor is a city with many secrets. And we should never forget the history that surrounds us every day. You never know when the spirits of the past may make themselves known.**

In its long life, the cobblestone house has seen much tragedy. The Ticknor family lost 11 of their 12 children to various illnesses. A fire in 1924 destroyed many of the outbuildings and fighting it dried up the farm's water reserves ending the livelihood of the Campbell family, who managed to save their beautiful house by throwing wet blankets onto its roof.

Since then, visitors to the museum have reported seeing a woman looking out of one of the upper story windows, and a man sitting in the dining room. A little boy who allegedly drowned in the well, has been seen running around the property.

Cobblestone Farm was one of several Michigan properties featured in *Haunted Travels of Michigan* by Beverlee J. Rydel and Kathleen R. Tedsen. A paranormal investigation the sisters participated in resulted in some fascinating experiences. While asking yes or no questions in the barn, the group seemed to receive intelligent responses via knocking sounds. One knock for yes and two for no. When they asked if the spirit, or whatever was present, minded the group being there in the barn, two knocks answered. However, when the team continued to stay, a thunderous single knock shook the barn.

Surprisingly, this did not deter the investigators, and they remained to ask more questions. When someone asked if the presence had something to do with the 1924 fire, the temperature in the barn began to rise steadily from 73 degrees to 87! EMF detectors also registered higher and higher levels of electric fields in the air.

While reviewing evidence after the investigation, the investigators were surprised to find several names whispered by persons unseen on their recording devices. Among them were Winona, Ben, Buck Weiner, and Jay Ticknor.

Ann Arbor is a city with many secrets. And we should never forget the history that surrounds us every day. You never know when the spirits of the past may make themselves known.

## Crazy Wisdom Bookstore

The Crazy Wisdom Bookstore opened its doors at 114 South Main Street in 1999, but the building itself has been around since at least 1857. Its first occupants were Hutzel and Company, better known today as Hutzel Plumbing and Heating (though they started off as a grocery store, not as plumbers). Rumor has it that the second floor, the former location of the Crazy Wisdom Tearoom, was a speakeasy during Prohibition. Given the secretive nature of speakeasies, it is difficult to confirm this story, but we do know that Ann Arbor banned alcohol before the rest of the nation did with the passing of the 18th Amendment, and the city's substantial German population did not take it well. Given this history, is it any wonder that customers as well as employees have experienced things that they can't explain?

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One evening, after the store was closed and the customers had all left, the lone employee closing down the tearoom was frightened by the glass globe of the lighting fixture shattering behind her. When she looked up, the fixture was swinging wildly, which it had never done before. None of the surrounding fixtures were moving, and there was no breeze to have sent this one into motion.

After the tearoom had been closed for several months, a bookstore employee was at the front counter when the phone began to ring. But it wasn't a customer with a question at the other end of the line. The call had originated from inside the store. Someone, or some*thing*, was calling the front desk from the phone in the empty tearoom.

A popular phenomenon heard by several former employees is a mysterious giggling encountered near the elevator in the building's basement. On one occasion, it sounded as if little girls were conspiratorially whispering together followed by high-pitched giggling. The store was closed, and there were two people in the building at the time: the person in the basement who heard the giggling and another employee two entire floors away in the tearoom. It should be noted that directly above this location, on the main floor, was once the home of a fairy door. So perhaps this particular phenomenon was fairy rather than ghostly mischief.

## Gandy Dancer

Gandy Dancer is a popular restaurant with a gorgeous historical interior. Many in Ann Arbor probably already know that it was once the city's Michigan Central Railroad Depot built in 1886. The name itself is a reference to its railroad past. Gandy dancer (a.k.a. section hand) was once a slang term for a person who laid and maintained the train tracks, a job largely done by machines now.

A "well-respected employee" told MLive in 1991 that when the building was still a depot, it was used to temporarily hold the bodies of World War I soldiers that were shipped home after dying in battle. Their families came to the depot to claim them for local burial. The depot was also a busy place for soldiers coming and going throughout World War II, after which rail traffic slowed considerably.

**A popular phenomenon heard by several former employees is a mysterious giggling encountered near the elevator in the building's basement.**

Places of transition like a train station, with countless passengers coming and going for decades, are often considered by those in the paranormal community to be beacons. Whether this is because so many people passing through creates more opportunities for some to stick around (as it were) or the heightened emotions of saying goodbye to your loved ones for the last time leaves an impression on the landscape, no one can say. It is also believed that after death, people can (and do) return to places of great importance in their lives such as a childhood home or beloved business.

Gandy Dancer's founder, seasoned restaurateur Chuck Muer, died tragically in 2005 along with his wife and two friends when his boat disappeared during a bad storm in the Bermuda Triangle.

Regardless, people have reported strange activity at the modern restaurant. Lights have been known to turn upside down, glasses fly off shelves, and a mysterious, well-dressed man has also been seen hanging around.

**Places of transition like a train station, with countless passengers coming and going for decades, are often considered by those in the paranormal community to be beacons.**

*Crysta Coburn is a long-time contributor to* The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal*, one of the authors of* Ypsilanti Ghosts & Legends*, and she cohosts the popular Michigan-based podcast* Haunted Mitten *which covers ghost stories, urban legends, cryptids, UFOs sightings, and more events reported all throughout the Mitten State (including the UP).* Haunted Mitten *is available wherever you get your podcasts. In partnership with Ann Arbor Community Education & Recreation,* Haunted Mitten *will be conducting haunted tours of downtown Ann Arbor this October. Check reced.a2schools.org for dates and times.*

# Spirit Seeds

By Triana Jones

*Welcome to Spirit Seeds! I'm Triana, your guide through this journey of inquiry. I am a single mother, a Wounded Healer, an Eclectic Witch, and a practicing Spiritualist of sixteen years. My last few years have been spent in the pursuit of knowledge, which I believe is one of the master keys of life. I received my first oracle deck from my grandfather sixteen years ago and have been reading cards professionally for the past seven years. In 2023, I was certified in Quantum Healing Hypnosis Therapy and Herbalism.*

*In this column, readers submit their questions, and we dive deep to find the answers. We'll embark on a journey of holistic exploration, delving into ancient practices and unraveling the enigmas of existence. Whether you're a seasoned enthusiast or a curious newcomer, this column offers a platform for deepening your understanding and expanding your consciousness. Are you curious about a certain body/mind/spirit subject or practice? Seeking advice or perspective on a spiritual or holistic matter? Submit your questions at AskSpiritSeed@gmail.com and have a chance to be featured in our next issue.*

## How can I use advanced intentional living space principles to create a harmonious home, energetically balanced, and aligned with my spiritual path?

When it comes to creating a home that feels harmonious and energetically aligned with your spiritual path, intentional living space principles are a game-changer. Think of your home not just as a shelter, but as a living, breathing extension of your aura—a container for your energy, your evolution, and your sacred work. I always begin with energy mapping. This means tuning into the subtle feel of each room. I'll walk through my space slowly, either using my intuition or tools like a pendulum, noting where the energy feels stagnant or too chaotic. Corners where energy gets "stuck" are prime places to add something that encourages flow, like a hanging crystal, a softly chiming bell, a tall leafy plant, or even a mirror to redirect light and movement. I like to think of it as acupuncture for your home—strategic points to unblock and restore balance. From there, I focus on the five elements—Earth, Air, Fire, Water, and Spirit. Each one offers energetic support, and when they're all present in a room, you create a deeply grounding yet expansive environment. I might place a Himalayan salt lamp for Earth, incense or feathers for Air, candles for Fire, a small fountain or seashells for Water, and a meaningful talisman or crystal grid for Spirit.

Color and light also play huge roles. I use chakra-aligned colors intentionally—deep blues and purples for my meditation space to activate higher consciousness and soft greens and browns in communal areas for grounding and heart-centered connection. Natural light is key, but at night I rely on warm, soft lighting to create a cocoon-like sanctuary. I also develop micro-altars—small sacred spots on shelves, windowsills, or tables where I place affirmations, seasonal offerings, or spiritual tools. These become energetic focal points that remind me of my intentions, goals, and growth. I clear these areas regularly with sound (like a singing bowl or chime), smoke cleansing, or Reiki energy to keep them vibrant and active. But above all, I make sure that everything in my home feels like me, not just aesthetically, but energetically. If something no longer resonates, I release it with gratitude. The goal isn't perfection—it's intuitive harmony.

## What are the best practices for creating and using a vision board to manifest my highest potential and dreams?

Creating a vision board is one of my favorite manifestation tools because it bridges the gap between the unseen and the tangible. But to truly harness its magic, you have to approach it with intention. It's not just about slapping images on a board—it's about aligning with your soul's highest calling and giving form to your inner vision. I always begin by grounding and connecting to my higher self. Before I gather anything, I set the tone. I might cleanse the space with incense, light a candle, or play soft music. Then I'll sit in meditation, even just for five to ten minutes, and ask: What am I truly ready to receive? What dreams are ready to come alive? This isn't about ego-driven goals, but soul-aligned intentions that light me up from within. When I gather materials—magazines, printed images, affirmations, even natural elements—I choose with care. I'm looking for things that feel alive. For example, instead of grabbing a generic photo of money or a beach house, I ask, "What does abundance or peace feel like to me?" Maybe it's a cozy cabin in the woods or a group of smiling people in deep connection. I choose words and visuals that resonate with my energy, not just my mind. I often organize the board by themes or life areas: purpose, health, relationships, spiritual growth, and joy. At the center, I place a photo of myself radiating joy and confidence, anchoring me as the co-creator of this vision. This reminds me that all of this is possible through me, not just around me. A vision board isn't about controlling outcomes—it's about tuning your vibration to your desires and letting the universe meet you halfway. When made with heart and intention, it becomes a living prayer for the future you're already stepping into.

## What are the best ways to protect and shield my energy field from negative entities and psychic attacks?

This is such an essential topic, especially if you're an empath, healer, or someone on a spiritual path who- is sensitive to energies. Your aura is your energetic skin, and just like your physical body, it needs daily care and strong boundaries—especially in a world full of emotional noise, energetic clutter, and, yes, the occasional negative entity or psychic interference. I begin every day with energetic hygiene, no exceptions. That might look like smudging with ethically-sourced sage, palo santo, or mugwort (which I love for deeper spiritual cleansing), followed by Reiki self-treatment. I run energy through my hands, crown, heart, and solar plexus, imagining golden or white light flushing out anything heavy, foreign, or draining. Water is also powerful, so I'll visualize my shower rinsing off residual energy or soak in Epsom salt baths when I need a reset. Visualization is key to shielding. I'll close my eyes and imagine a strong, radiant field around me—like a glowing cocoon or sphere of white-gold light. Depending on what I'm protecting against, I might imagine it mirrored (reflecting any negativity) or coated in violet flame to transmute dense energy. I always affirm something like: "I am safe. My energy is sovereign. Only frequencies of love, truth, and alignment are allowed here." That declaration makes a real difference. For extra support, I wear protection crystals like black tourmaline, shungite, labradorite, or smoky quartz. I'll program them by holding them in my hand and speaking intention into them—"You protect me from all harm, energetic or otherwise." I keep them in my pockets, bras, or even taped to the back of my phone. But the most important layer of protection is vibrational alignment.

Lower vibrational entities and psychic attacks can only latch onto you where there are openings—unhealed wounds, fear, doubt, or disempowerment. So, I do regular shadow work, keep my nervous system regulated through breathwork and grounding, and stay rooted in love and sovereignty. When I feel centered and fully embodied, I become naturally repellent to low-vibe interference. And if I ever feel something off, I don't panic—I respond with power. I might say out loud, "You do not have permission to be here. I banish all negative influence now, in the name of love, light, and divine sovereignty." You are the authority in your space. Your intention is your sword. Remember, protection isn't about fear—it's about energetic mastery. The more conscious and confident you become in managing your energy, the stronger your field becomes. You're not fragile—you're radiant. Own your light and let that be your shield.

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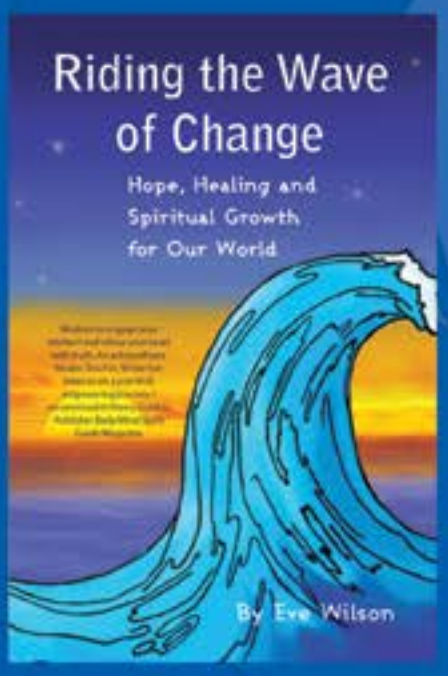


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